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shared landscapes

ARCHAEOLOGIES OF ATTACHMENT AND
THE PASTORAL INDUSTRY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

...if the black fellas weren't there, they wouldn't have been able to do it... where the cattle went, they went (Bruce Lockwood, Armidale, 21 March 2001).

The heritage of the pastoral industry stands as an integral symbol of identity for rural communities – both black and white – in New South Wales. Modern changes in pastoral land management, infrastructure and technology, combined with broader land-use changes and increased community interest in the conservation and rehabilitation of former grazing lands, has meant that many former pastoral properties have been abandoned or acquired for other uses. Tracking the history of these land-use changes, *Shared Landscapes* presents new ways of understanding historic heritage in settler societies through cross-disciplinary case studies that examine the heritage of the pastoral industry in two national parks.

Assessing its current state of interpretation and management in New South Wales, Rodney Harrison shows that pastoral heritage is more than just 'woolsheds and homesteads', the showpieces of white, male, settler-colonial economies. Pastoral heritage is the product of the mutual histories of Aboriginal and settler Australians. It is a form of heritage that is both in, and a part of the landscape. His 'archaeological' approach to the heritage of the pastoral industry involves both recording sites and revealing attachments to community heritage, demonstrating that writing shared histories and celebrating shared heritage has the creative power to reconcile Aboriginal and settler Australians in powerful and positive ways.

Extensively illustrated with over 200 plates, maps and line drawings, this book represents a major intervention in the practice of cultural heritage management and historical archaeology in Australia, while engaging with broader issues of history, race, place and identity.



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Environment and Conservation (NSW)

DR RODNEY HARRISON is a Research Fellow in the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research at the Australian National University in Canberra. This book was written while employed as the historical archaeologist by the cultural heritage research unit in the Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW), formerly the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. His first book, *After Captain Cook* (co-edited with Christine Williamson, 2002; reprinted 2004), presented a series of essays on the historical archaeology of Aboriginal Australia. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Western Australia (2002), on the history, archaeology and contemporary social significance of Aboriginal pastoral labour in the southeast Kimberley.

Back cover: Community collaborators Vera Nixon, Arthur Hooper, Dorothy Kelly and Josie Byno at Dennawan, Culgoa National Park, 2001.

SHARED LANDSCAPES RODNEY HARRISON



shared landscapes

ARCHAEOLOGIES OF ATTACHMENT AND
THE PASTORAL INDUSTRY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

rodney harrison

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shearers sitting on a poddy lamb, Walgett NSW', c.1936.
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UNSW
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Studies in the Cultural Construction of Open Space

shared
landscapes

shared landscapes

ARCHAEOLOGIES OF ATTACHMENT AND
THE PASTORAL INDUSTRY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

rodney harrison



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Aboriginal readers are warned that this book contains the names and photographs of Aboriginal people who have passed away.

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foreword

Modern changes in pastoral land management, infrastructure and technology, combined with broader land-use changes and increased community interest in the conservation and rehabilitation of former grazing lands, has meant that many former pastoral properties have been abandoned or acquired for other uses.

Still, to many Australians, pastoralism stands at the symbolic heart of our national identity. It has seeped deep into the Australian psyche and is reflected in our literature, iconography, national character and cultural life. Pastoral heritage stands as an integral symbol of identity for rural communities – both black and white – in New South Wales.

Defining and representing Australian nationhood and identity has always been problematic. Perhaps in recent times, the debate has intensified, and long familiar representations of our identity and nationhood have been scrutinised and questioned critically. Accordingly there have been demonstrable shifts in our understandings and representations of what it means to be 'Australian' and to feel a sense of 'belonging' to the Australian landscape.

Such shifts may also be distinguished in nationalist and pastoral histories. Contested by Aboriginal people's historical experience and settler Australians' voiced experiences of everyday life, understandings of our history and heritage have altered. *Shared Landscapes* is timely and connects with these vital debates. With a focus on local social relationships, rather than the 'great' themes of settler-colonial expansion, this book goes to the core of our contemporary historical psyche and the significance of the pastoral heritage managed as part of the New South Wales reserve system.

While some pastoral heritage places, like the great woolsheds of Kinchega and Mungo national parks, have iconic value for all Australians, much pastoral heritage is more modest: the tumble-down remains of windmills and shearers' huts, the rusted trough beside a former travelling stock route, or the tin cans and broken glass associated with a drovers' campsite. *Shared Landscapes* reveals the felt significance to local communities of such humble remains, and their integral role in reconciling the histories of Aboriginal and settler Australians. In so doing it unravels the exclusively 'black' or 'white' interpretation of historic heritage, and persuasively argues for a shared, cross-cultural history and heritage of the pastoral industry in New South Wales. Working through the disciplines of history, archaeology and anthropology, with case-studies in Culgoa National Park and Oxley Wild Rivers National Park, *Shared Landscapes* explores the vital role that the heritage of these former pastoral landscapes plays in creating meanings, shaping social memory and revealing the shared histories of Aboriginal and settler Australians.

Shared Landscapes can be thought to be timely for another reason. On 24 September 2003, the government announced the creation of the Department of Environment and

Conservation (NSW), to bring together the staff of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Environment Protection Authority, the Royal Botanic Gardens and Resource NSW, and to create strong linkages with the Sydney Catchment Authority. The creation of the Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW) provides an exciting opportunity for developing an integrated approach to the management of both cultural and natural heritage and Aboriginal and historic heritage values at a landscape scale. Developing new approaches to understanding and analysing the landscape is critical to the Department of Environment and Conservation's aim to integrate the management of natural and cultural landscapes for long-term ecological, social and economic sustainability. By mapping the landscape biographies of ordinary Australians, and examining the heritage of the pastoral industry at various spatial scales, Shared Landscapes takes significant steps towards showing us how this is to be done.

The NSW Government is fostering innovative interpretations of our history and heritage. It is also committed to creating a world-class reserve system. Since 1995 there has been exponential growth in the State's reserves. Across the State, declarations and future commitments will ensure that large areas of land with high conservation value will be conserved in perpetuity for the people of New South Wales. In the creation of these reserves we see the embodiment of our continually evolving relationship with land writ large. They become part of our collective environmental archive, ensuring that not only significant natural heritage is conserved, but that the heritage of our past interactions with landscape is conserved too. Shared Landscapes shows us just how important that past is.



BOB DEBUS

Minister for the Environment

preface

Shared Landscapes is the result of a strategic research project developed by the Research Unit, Cultural Heritage Division of the Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW). The branch was originally within the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), but in 2003 became part of the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). The Shared Histories of the Pastoral Industry in New South Wales project (see Harrison 2001; 2002d) aimed to develop an understanding of pastoral heritage according to community perceptions and attachments, and to identify changes in conservation and management practices that emerged from this. It was also intended to examine how the heritage of pastoralism in New South Wales reflects themes of social interaction between Aboriginal people and settler Australians, and how the heritage of the pastoral industry reflects a shared, cross-cultural Australian history.

With that in mind, this book looks especially at the 'materiality' of place which complements the convergence of people and place that is central to both Aboriginal and non-indigenous pastoral narratives (Harrison in press), and former NPWS land conservation and management planning. While 'place' and 'landscape' are important concepts in this study, the 'intangible' heritage of memory and attachment, and their relationship with landscape and physical heritage places such as buildings and artefacts, are also examined.

MANAGING PASTORAL HERITAGE

Those unfamiliar with the DEC and its Parks and Wildlife Division may wonder why a 'nature conservation agency' would be interested in pastoralism – an industry more commonly linked to land degradation and species extinction (eg Lunney 2001). The DEC manages a vast number of former pastoral properties and landscapes as part of the protected area system. Indeed, over 95 per cent of land it now manages has at some point been used as pasture for grazing (Harrison 2002c). The DEC takes a holistic approach to conservation, integrating natural, cultural and community values. 'Landscape conservation' recognises that the whole landscape is greater than the sum of its parts, and involves people in the integrated management of natural and cultural landscapes (NPWS 2001a). The Department of Environment and Conservation also has an important legislative role in the protection of both Aboriginal and historic heritage.

Pastoralism and the history of the former NPWS are intimately intertwined in a number of different, and at times startling ways. For example, much of the land now managed by the DEC became available after about 1970 through the government resuming large numbers of small (and ultimately unviable) soldier-settler blocks that had been selected after the First and Second World Wars from the large squatters' runs of the mid-nineteenth century (see Harrison 2002c; and Chapter 2). The proclamation of Kosciusko State Park

in 1944 – one of the first true conservation reserves to be established in New South Wales – largely came about through the need to limit high-country summer grazing because of its potential effects on soil erosion rates in the light of plans to develop the Snowy Mountain Hydroelectric Scheme (Charles 1998: 14ff). The debates surrounding the eventual cessation of snow-lease grazing in the Kosciusko park in the late 1950s were bitter and heated. These deep historical connections between pastoralism and the history of the former NPWS are reflected in the large number of former pastoral properties that are now managed as parks and reserves.

SHARED LANDSCAPES

This book has two primary concerns, each of them reflected in its title. The first, that pastoral heritage and history needs to be understood as *shared* between Aboriginal and settler Australians, arises from a deep discomfort with the division between the management of Aboriginal and settler heritage in Australia. While Aboriginal people have clearly played a key role in the history of the pastoral industry, and hold deep and intimate attachments to its heritage, their voices have largely been absent in the management of pastoral heritage.

The book’s second primary concern is with the *landscapes* of pastoralism, as a model for understanding and managing pastoral heritage. As the case-studies in this book demonstrate, pastoral heritage is best understood as a system which is articulated at a landscape scale. The management of ‘woolsheds and homesteads’ in isolation from other elements of the system renders them meaningless. It is not only the physical heritage of the pastoral industry which is important, but the memories and stories of oral historians which bring the significance of these often humble places to light. By working collaboratively with the communities who create these heritage places in the present, we see the way in which they resonate with the intangible values of human attachments and form a focus for locality and community building.

The book provides two detailed case-studies that result from a collaborative and multi-disciplinary approach to cultural heritage research. Working closely with local communities, and drawing on the results of archaeological, historical and anthropological research methods, *Shared Landscapes* demonstrates the application of ideas about landscape, communities and place to the field of cultural heritage management in Australia. While the case-studies draw on research undertaken within the protected area system of New South Wales, the methods described are of wide applicability to heritage places throughout Australia and in other settler societies.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Shared Landscapes is divided into four parts. Part I features an introduction, Chapter 1, providing a theoretical background to the book and setting out the project’s aims and theoretical influences. Chapter 2 relates a history of the pastoral industry in New South Wales looking at the spatial and social aspects of pastoralism. It also reviews the historiography of the pastoral industry in Australia, identifying trends in the reading of pastoral history over the past 50 years. This chapter forms a broad background for the detailed case-studies in Parts II and III. Chapter 3 outlines briefly the methods used in the two case-studies.

Parts II and III contain the case-studies themselves. These were chosen to illustrate a different point about the history and heritage of the pastoral industry in New South Wales. Part II examines the heritage of the pastoral industry from the former Kunderang pastoral station, now in Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. Chapter 4 outlines the history of this former pastoral property, based on an analysis of documentary records and concentrating on its history of land tenure. Chapter 5 relates the relatively ‘hidden histories’ of the Aboriginal

people who formed a major component of the labour force responsible for Kunderang’s success as a pastoral property for over 120 years. Chapter 6 then examines the way in which the archaeological remains serve to write the histories of the pastoral industry onto the landscape itself. The chapter also considers the way in which pastoral work allowed both Aboriginal and settler pastoralists to develop shared relationships with the landscape of the Kunderang Gorges. This is a book partly about different ways of looking at a landscape, so Part II is primarily concerned with leading the reader through different ways of understanding and relating to this particular place.

Part III examines the history, archaeology and contemporary significance of a former Aboriginal reserve and pastoral labour camp of Dennawan in western New South Wales. Chapter 7 outlines a background history of the reserve, detailing the relationship between it and a group of former pastoral properties now managed as Culgoa National Park. Then, Chapter 8 describes a detailed archaeological recording of the site, while Chapter 9 describes contemporary Muruwari people’s attachment to, and social practices associated with, Dennawan. This case-study particularly illustrates how communities use heritage as part of the active creation of locality in the present, and it emphasises the nexus between people, objects, memory and place, and the role of material remains in structuring contemporary lifeworlds.

The book’s conclusion in Part IV, Chapter 10, draws together and recounts the major themes that emerge from these studies, and offers a new model of pastoral heritage for New South Wales. This new model is sensitive to the role of the past in the present, the role of community in managing heritage, and how the heritage of the pastoral industry is shared by both Aboriginal and settler communities. It argues for a more sophisticated understanding of pastoral heritage: as being intimately related to landscape and perceptions of place; residing as much in memory as in the prominent material remains of woolsheds and homesteads; and as a land-use system that has created people as much as they have created it. The case-studies suggest that seeing pastoral history and heritage as shared has major implications for the management of pastoral heritage in Australia and other settler societies.

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generously provided me with drafts, shared information and allowed me to ‘tag along’ on site visits while they were working on the Conservation Management Plan for East Kunderang. Cynthia McRae introduced me to many of the former Kunderang workers who were interviewed for the project, provided accommodation at west Kunderang, gave me access to oral history interviews she undertook for the former Armidale NPWS office, and assisted me in recording oral histories and mapping ‘landscape biographies’ for this book.

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part 1

HISTORY, HERITAGE
AND THE PASTORAL INDUSTRY

CHAPTER 1

Shared Landscapes?

The idea that ‘space’, and in particular open space, is socially constructed as ‘place’, has been a cornerstone of human geography and the social sciences since the mid-twentieth century. Nowhere is this distinction more persuasive than in the vast open spaces of the grazing lands of Australia, and the physically and mentally constructed landscapes of both Aboriginal and settler pastoralists.

This book – like the others in the series *Studies in the Cultural Construction of Open Space* (Martin Thomas 2001; Mandy Thomas 2002) – takes a new perspective on those parts of the landscape that we think of as ‘unoccupied’, and unravels the social constructions of such open spaces. In the previous two volumes, the focus was on Macedonian–Australian and Vietnamese–Australian migrants’ experiences of National Parks and ‘nature’ in New South Wales. This volume examines the historical experiences of the many Aboriginal and settler pastoralists who once lived and worked on former pastoral lands now managed as National Parks, and the contemporary attachments which they and the wider ‘community’ feel toward the heritage of the pastoral industry in New South Wales.

While this book covers only New South Wales, it demonstrates the practical application of cultural heritage theory, looking particularly at the social significance of heritage to local communities and the way that this connects with physical archaeological remains (‘trace’) at a landscape level. The issues surrounding the cross-cultural interpretation of historic heritage raised in the book are common to Australia and other settler societies throughout the world.

THE CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF OPEN SPACE

Central to the book is the notion of ‘landscape’ and the relationship between space and place. Traditional thinking about landscape emphasises the binary distinction between the material/real construction of space and the imagined/mental construction of ‘place’, and assume the primacy of space over place (Casey 1996). Postmodern geographer Edward Soja describes such approaches as ‘bicameral’ (1989; see discussion in Blake 2002: 141) – a criticism of philosophical frameworks that draw a strict distinction between the cultural and natural features of landscapes.

Several influential spatial thinkers have suggested the need to develop another way of looking at space: Foucault (1986) calls it ‘heterotopological’ (see also Bonazzi 2002); Lefebvre (1991) describes it using the concept of ‘fully lived space’; and Soja (1996) terms it a ‘thirdspace’ approach. The unifying feature of these diverse philosophical approaches to landscape and space lies in their interpretive scope to examine the geographical, social and historical spaces – the spaces of everyday life and experience – as well as those intangible and unknown spaces on the margins.

Developing new approaches to understanding and analysing the landscape is critical to the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation’s aim to integrate the management of natural and cultural landscapes for long-term ecological, social and economic sustainability. Indeed Soja’s radically polemical spatial stance, articulated in the phrase ‘putting space first’ (2000: xvi), may be consistent with the Department of Environment and Conservation’s recent approach to landscape as the nexus for understanding and conserving both natural and cultural heritage values. A heterotopological approach to open space is also the inspiration for the perspective taken in this book on the shared landscapes of the pastoral industry.

ARCHAEOLOGIES OF ATTACHMENT

In using the subtitle ‘archaeologies of attachment’, I follow Byrne’s (2002) definition of the phrase to refer to the relationship between the material traces of the past and their contemporary significance to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. In documenting traces of the pastoral industry in the landscape, I am as interested in the way that people understand and think about these traces in the present, as I am in the information they can provide about the past. Thus heritage, archaeology and the community are intrinsically interlinked.

The term ‘archaeology’ describes not only those methods and practices associated with the modern discipline of archaeology itself, but a distinct ‘way of seeing’ or of exploring source material. This follows the use of the term by Michel Foucault (1970; 1972; 1980; 1986) to describe a method for discourse analysis, the ultimate intention of which is to discover discontinuities in the conditions of human knowledge and thus reveal the ‘epistemic’ space, and possibilities of, human knowledge in the past. For Foucault, the term ‘archaeology’ describes a method of analysis that emphasises how the subject of study can be thought to form part of a series of unspoken practices that can be ‘read’ as a ‘text’:

This term does not imply the search for a beginning ... it designates the general theme of a description that questions the already-said at the level of its existence: of the enunciative function that operates within it, of the discursive formation, and the general archive system to which it belongs. Archaeology describes discourses as practices specified in the element of the archive (Foucault 1972: 131).

While the subject matter covered here is not always what would be associated with a traditional view of archaeology, it is my intention to discuss both the physical and discursive layering that forms the basis of the landscapes under study. While in parts of the book I have mapped and analysed the spatial patterns in the distribution of artefacts and material remains (as in Chapters 6 and 8), I have also examined the discursive practices of writing and re-inscribing the meaning of particular landscapes through time (in Chapter 9 and the discussion of ‘palimpsest’ landscapes in Chapter 6). Both of these approaches can be considered ‘archaeological’ in the sense that they share an interest in stratification and layering, the examination of the landscape as an ‘archive’, and its implication for understanding human relationships with time and space.

HISTORIC HERITAGE IN CRISIS

As a number of authors have recently argued (Byrne 1996; 2002; 2003b; Godwin and L’Oste-Brown 2002; Harrison 2000a; McIntyre-Tamwoy 2001; 2002), the material traces of Aboriginal life from after the European invasion of Australia have largely been neglected in Australian cultural heritage management. Concurrent with this has been a general academic neglect of post-invasion Aboriginal archaeology or ‘contact archaeology’

(Murray 1993; Harrison and Paterson 2000; Torrence and Clarke 2000; Williamson and Harrison 2002). The division of management and legislation used to protect Aboriginal and historic heritage in Australia has further compounded this problem. By studying and managing Aboriginal (read 'prehistoric') and historic (read 'European') heritage places separately, heritage management agencies have generally not allowed themselves to critically engage with the shared or cross-cultural aspects of post-contact places. This is despite the significant and prolonged period in which Indigenous and settler Australians have occupied shared geographic and social spaces since the colonisation and invasion of the Australian continent.

In New South Wales, as in other states, the division in the management of Aboriginal and historic heritage comes about partly through the separate allocation of responsibilities for each to different agencies. The Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW) has primary responsibilities for managing Aboriginal heritage in partnership with the community, while the NSW Heritage Office has primary responsibilities for managing historic heritage. The logic of this division is apparent in the origins of each 'stream' of heritage conservation practice. The provisions relating to 'relics' in the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* 1974 were largely a response to pressure from professional archaeologists, whose main concerns were with the material remains of the pre-contact Aboriginal past (Byrne et al 2001). Historic heritage legislation meanwhile arose through popular post-war preservationist and environmental movements that were concerned with prominent built heritage places such as The Rocks (Davison 1991; Kelly and McConville 1991). Emphasising the two extremes of the cultural heritage of Australian history and prehistory has tended to let Aboriginal historic places fall between the gaps.

But those moments of sharing geographical space have created a cross-cultural dialogue that has had a significant impact on the development of Australian national identity. Indeed, one way of viewing the whole of the history of Australia is as a history of social and cultural interaction and the co-creation of the contemporary nation as a result of these relations. When we begin to consider Australian history from this perspective, we are in a unique position to chart the continuities and gaps in the history of both settler and Aboriginal communities so as to better understand our contemporary lives.

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE AS 'PRE'-HISTORY

As well as a division between the management of Aboriginal heritage and historic heritage, Aboriginal heritage management has emphasised what Byrne (2002) calls the 'lavish, almost obsessional recording of pre-contact places' to the neglect of post-contact places. This has led to the illusion of a break between the pre-colonial past – when 'authentic' Aboriginal people lived as hunter-gatherers – and the present – when contemporary Aboriginal Australians generally live a radically different lifestyle (Griffiths 1996; Russell 2001). This is supported by the settler colonial myth of *terra nullius*, and 'foundational' mythologies that see the arrival of white founders as the starting point of history (Thomas 1994; 1999). It has resulted in a radical disassociation of Aboriginal people from the heritage of post-colonial settlement history.

While historic heritage usually celebrates the great themes of exploration, pioneering settlement and colonial expansion, pre-contact Aboriginal heritage has also found itself being used by settler colonists as evidence of a heroic, distant past. This history documents the deep and 'authentic' archaeology of the people usurped by the settler nation. The collection and possession of Aboriginal material culture by settler colonists paradoxically worked to dis-possess Aboriginal people of their land (Healy 1994). Within the complex machinations of the colonial project, the heritage of Aboriginal people living and working

in post-1788 Australia has been almost neglected, or at best under-represented, in heritage management and the interpretation of historic heritage places.

However, as Byrne (2002) argues, the status quo on which this neglect is founded is unstable and tenuous. The same instruments that can be used to establish this status quo can also be used to criticise it. By looking for evidence of Aboriginal people's lives, lived in and through the landscape during this historic period, we can begin to fill the void that has been created by this neglect.

A major concern of *Shared Landscapes* is, therefore, to uncover the distinctly Aboriginal histories of the pastoral industry, and the way in which Aboriginal people have their own attachments to the heritage of the pastoral industry in New South Wales. Another important theme of this book is the mutual and concurrent histories of Aboriginal and settler Australians who worked *together* in the pastoral industry, and how interpreting this as a 'shared' heritage might play a role in a social project of collective, reconciliatory remembering. This shared history emphasises the entanglement (cf Thomas 1991) of black and white histories in post-1788 Australia.

SHARED HISTORIES: THE MUTUAL HERITAGE OF POST-1788 AUSTRALIA

By naming this book *Shared Landscapes* I have tried to emphasise the mutual histories of Aboriginal and settler Australians. The term 'shared histories' was first bought to my attention in a paper published by Tim Murray (1996; see also 2000a; 2000b, 2002; and Lewis 1997). I have since adopted the term to refer to a 'vision' of history or archaeology aimed at elucidating a relationship between the deep prehistory of Australian Aboriginal people and the mutual histories of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working and living together after 1788 (Harrison 2001; 2002d).

Influenced particularly by the work of historians Peter Read (1996; 1998; 2000) and Henry Reynolds (1982; 1987; 1990), and anthropologist Gillian Cowlishaw (1988; 1998) these mutual histories include the history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working and living together. They also include the shared experiences of segregation and frontier warfare. Although clearly Aboriginal people and settlers experienced such racial violence and separation differently, they are part of a history of Australia that has been mutually constitutive of who we are as Aboriginal and settler Australians today. Shared histories are about acknowledging the mutuality of racial relations in Australian history, and the role that these mutual self-definitions have played in constituting the Australian nation-state. As Deborah Bird-Rose and Darrell Lewis note:

The histories of black and white people in this country are not disconnected. This is a rather dramatic story; it is not the story found in history books ... but ... it is the kind of history everyone has. We are suggesting that the doing of history – oral history, place oriented history, small scale face to face histories of the real relationships between black and white people on this continent – recovers an area of silence. The recovery demonstrates that the concept of black and white history is too simple ... [these are] the histories of people who have shared time and space, shared work and leisure, shared life and death (1992: 35).

The notion of shared history discussed here needs to be clearly distinguished from attempts to represent a homogenous national history in which race is marginalised as the basis for different perspectives and experiences (like those discussed by Reed 1999; see discussions in Cowlishaw 1999; 2001). Instead, I want to examine relationships between Aboriginal and settler Australians, including both personal relationships and those that existed between individuals and the state. By focussing on the 'local performative dynamics of race' (after Morris 2001: 242) which have created both tensions between

Aboriginal and settler Australians, as well as created these sociological categories of race themselves, this book presents a radically different perspective on an aspect of history that most Australians feel they know well. This new perspective provides a challenge to a series of deeply pervasive mythologies about the arenas within which we, as settler and Aboriginal Australians, became who we are. It uncovers the shared history of black and white Australians becoming *us*.

SHARED HISTORIES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Shared histories intersect directly with the interpretation of 'cultural heritage' (Russell 1997; Harper 1996; Shackel 2003). If we define historic heritage as largely concerned with the 'great' settler colonial themes – the aspirations and activities of pioneering (white) settlers – then we deny the mutuality of Australian history. In this book I want to redress this imbalance through a direct study into the mutual histories of Aboriginal and settler Australians working together in the pastoral industry in Australia, and the relevance of its heritage to contemporary people.

This is not to underplay the importance of those events and circumstances which kept Aboriginal people and settler Australians apart. Indeed, issues of massacres and frontier violence are as important to the case-studies in this book as issues of working together. In using the terms 'shared histories' and 'shared heritage', I want to emphasise the way in which Aboriginal and settler Australians have been engaged in a process of negotiated, intersecting histories. These intertwined histories have led to the development of distinct ways of seeing and understanding the landscape and each other. The pastoral industry is one area in which these interactions are perhaps more obvious than others, and so provides a case-study in the development of mutual colonial histories, and an examination of shared heritage, in Australia.

PASTORALISM AS CONTACT ZONE

In shifting the reader's gaze to begin to see pastoral history as shared between black and white Australians, the pastoral frontier becomes a 'contact zone'. Mary-Louise Pratt uses this term (1992: 6) – in opposition to 'frontier', which historically has been grounded within a Euro-American imperial expansionist perspective – to describe:

the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separate come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations ... [the term] invoke[s] the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect. By using the term 'contact' I aim to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters ... [to emphasise] copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power.

This project, and the cultural heritage places that it documents, have also been contact zones (see Clifford 1997: 188ff for a discussion of negotiations over objects in a museum as an example of a contact zone). In Chapter 4, I discuss the way in which a group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people were brought together to discuss options for the future management of a particular former pastoral property, and the dialogue between community members that ensued. Within this dialogue between two communities with a shared history, the historical experience of 'contact' was relived in the present. The concept of the pastoral industry as contact zone is therefore integral to the development of a new model of pastoral heritage management in New South Wales and Australia.

'WOOLSHEDS AND HOMESTEADS'

Shared Landscapes explicitly addresses the issue of Aboriginal people's attachment to the historic heritage of the pastoral industry. The absence of their histories from the management and interpretation of pastoral heritage in New South Wales and elsewhere is due, in addition to the reasons discussed above, to the dominant focus on technological and economic models of pastoral history in cultural heritage management. Under this dominant model of pastoral heritage, it is not only Aboriginal people's lives that have been made invisible, but also the lives of non-indigenous pastoral workers and their families. While heritage management agencies have uncovered the histories of the managers and owners of pastoral properties, their wider social and labour histories have generally been ignored.

Throughout this book, I use the term 'woolsheds and homesteads' to represent this preoccupation of heritage management agencies with the prominent built structures associated with the pastoral industry. As I show in Chapter 2, this reflects earlier themes in the historiography of the pastoral industry. This emphasis also reflects the dominant 'fabric-based' approach to heritage conservation and management in Australia (Byrne et al 2001). However, it has failed to keep step with more recent approaches to pastoral history – which emphasise social history and class-based readings of pastoralism.

A recent edition of *Historic Environment* (2001) journal titled 'Burra in the Bush' has illustrated this fabric-based approach to rural and pastoral heritage, and its accompanying perspective that rural historic heritage is the heritage of non-indigenous Australians. None of the articles explicitly addressed Aboriginal post-contact heritage in rural contexts – although one mentioned Lake Condah Aboriginal mission (Johnston and Buckley 2001) – while three papers that addressed pastoral heritage explicitly dealt exclusively with either built heritage (Mullens 2001), curtilage (Morris and Britton 2001) or economics (Burke 2001). Only one of the nine papers dealt with community values of rural heritage (Johnston and Buckley 2001). Rural historic heritage has in general been associated with prominent built places linked to the work and activities of white pioneers. It has been assessed in terms of the significance of this built heritage and its association with the 'great' themes of settler Australian economic history, but in general it has ignored the local, and the role of heritage in the creation of collective identity for both Aboriginal and settler communities.

An analysis of listings under the theme 'pastoralism' in the State Heritage Register of New South Wales amplifies this point. At the time of writing, the register listed 37 places under the theme of 'pastoralism', but none of these contain information on associations with particular Aboriginal people or communities who worked there. With the exception of one very early archaeological site (a large sandstone cut drain), all of them are architecturally prominent built heritage places. Of the three that do mention Aboriginal people, two discuss frontier violence perpetrated against Aboriginal people from the perspective of the settlers, without consideration of the disputed pastoral property's possible significance to Aboriginal people. The third listing mentions the existence of pre-contact Aboriginal sites, but is silent on the continued presence or associations with Aboriginal people after the property was established.

This demonstrates the emphasis, in pastoral heritage management in New South Wales, on the pioneering myths of white settlers doing battle against nature and the foreign Australian frontier. Aboriginal people are naturalised in this myth, so they appear in roles as a part of the natural world, waiting to be subdued by settlers. Also, almost all of the register's listings mention the owners and managers by name in their historical analysis, but none of them discuss the lives or social history of workers – settler or Aboriginal – on the properties.



FIGURE 1.1 Kerry and Co, 'Drafting sheep', c 1911–1912. This image specifically invokes the stereotype of the white, male pastoralist. Omissions from such photographs – for example women, children and Aboriginal people – form silences in the pictorial record of the pastoral industry in Australia. (Glass negative, full plate; from *Australian Immigration and Tourist Bureau, Pastoral New South Wales, 1912*; courtesy Powerhouse Museum: obj no 85/1284-169)

A similar bias is found in the 305 places that the Register of the National Estate for New South Wales lists under the theme 'farming and grazing'. Although there are some specific listings for places other than architecturally significant places – including several sets of yards, a cattle watering tank and reservoir, dry-stone walling at Kiama, and the mention of landscape elements in several of the listings – the emphasis is nonetheless overwhelmingly on buildings. None of the detailed listings accessed (some were in the process of being revised) specifically mentioned Aboriginal people's involvement in the work of any of the places listed, or the possibility that they might have been involved in their construction. Given what we know about the widespread involvement of Aboriginal people in the pastoral industry in New South Wales (see Chapter 2) and throughout Australia, the lack of any listing of pastoral heritage in New South Wales for its association with particular Aboriginal individuals or communities is a serious omission.

GENDER AND PASTORAL HERITAGE

In the same way that pastoral heritage has largely been interpreted as 'white' heritage, the histories that have been written to support the interpretation of pastoral heritage in Australia have generally worked to erase the labour and lives of women in the pastoral industry (McGrath 1987; Kijas 2003). This has particularly been the case for white women in the history and heritage of the pastoral industry.

Buildings have not been understood as gendered spaces. While the traditional heritage focus on pastoral homesteads might be thought to shed light on the household – an important

(although certainly not the main or only) traditionally feminine gendered space – this has not been the case (but see Allison 1998). One could imagine that, even within the woolsheds and homesteads model, there might arise an analysis of the ways in which each was typically gendered masculine and feminine. Clearly gender was 'performed' (after Butler 1993; and see Chapter 9) and made real in each of these spaces in particular ways, and the flow of bodies between the woolshed and homestead could form one focus for understanding the regular, performative 'rupturing' of their respective gendered categories. However, where the pastoral stereotype has been employed, it has been white *and* male, and it has been in this form that the pastoral stereotype has been most popularly invoked in the development of a broader sense of 'Australian identity'.

In reaction, one aim of this book has been to uncover the many guises in which women (both Aboriginal and settler) have appeared in the histories of the pastoral industry in each of the two case-studies – in those stereotypical domestic roles, but also as drovers, musterers, fencers and shearers. While gender itself is not an explicit theme in the book, this revealing of alternate histories of Aboriginal and settler women has been a consequence of undertaking more detailed, nuanced analyses of social relationships in each study location.



FIGURE 1.2 'Aboriginal lamb markers at Welltown, Goondiwindi'. A rare photograph of Aboriginal people who are identified as pastoral workers. (Courtesy State Library of New South Wales: BCP 02725)

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES AS HERITAGE

A symptom of the emphasis on prominent built heritage places has been the neglect of landscape heritage in New South Wales. While the notion of the 'cultural landscape' is now well established in cultural heritage management in Australia and internationally, its application to the identification and management of pastoral heritage has been relatively insignificant. Again this would seem to be a serious omission, given the fact that pastoralism is a land-use system, the heritage of which one would expect to be written in and across the landscape.

The new pastoral heritage model reflects not only the shared histories of Aboriginal and settler Australians working together, but the broader, landscape heritage of pastoralism. This inclusion of landscape emerges from speaking with local communities and former pastoral workers and their kin about what they think is important about the heritage of the pastoral industry. The landscape, and interactions with landscape, also informs and structures the oral histories of former pastoral station workers (Gill 1997; Harrison in press).

The landscape heritage of pastoralism has two important facets. The first involves the *cultural* landscapes of pastoralism – from the mental geographies of pastoral station workers to the social landscapes that are constituted and defined through working and living within them. Secondly, as a land-use system, pastoral uses of the land were organised and defined by the *natural* environment. The seasons, topography, vegetation and climate form the complex context within which pastoral practices were honed and localised in each region. The round of pastoral labour in turn affected the ways in which pastoral workers and their families interacted with and came to know and understand the landscape in which they existed. There is a subtle interplay here between the physical landscape and the mental landscapes of former pastoral labourers.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES DEFINED

In 1925, Carl Sauer introduced the concept of a ‘cultural landscape’ in his essay *Morphology of Landscape* (Sauer 1925). He argued that humans, through the medium of culture, were active agents of environmental transformation. This contrasted with that era’s dominant view that humans were entirely the product of their environment. The cultural landscape concept was eagerly picked up and developed by many of the social sciences in the wake of mid- to late-twentieth-century post-positivism (Rowntree 1996) – to the point where there is now a wide and distinct literature on landscape in many different fields, including archaeology (eg Anschuetz et al 2001), anthropology (eg Bender 1993; Bender and Winer 2001; Hirsch and O’Hanlon 1995), history and philosophy. The position of ‘space’ or landscape as a discourse which links together thinking right across the social sciences has been further solidified by the widespread adoption of ideas from the post-modern geographies of the likes of Edward Soja (1971; 1989; 1996; after de Certeau 1984; and see also Blake 2002) and others (Gregory and Urry 1985; Lefebvre 1991; Casey 1993; 2000; and see Shields 2002).

Reflecting the introduction of the concept in international cultural heritage management practice, there has been some discussion of landscape within the context of cultural heritage management in Australia. For instance, Blair and Truscott (1989) defined cultural landscapes as ‘those parts of the land surface which have been significantly modified by human activity, to distinguish them from natural or wilderness landscapes, which have little or no apparent evidence of human intervention’. This is what Soja would call a ‘firstspace’ approach: it focusses on the material aspects of space. The problem with such definitions is that they tend to shift emphasis away from the cultural attachments that may be constructed around substantially unaltered landscapes, as, for example, in Aboriginal hunter–gathering contexts, or the ways in which non-indigenous Australians conceptualise wild places or ‘wilderness’ (for recent articulation of the Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW)’s response to such conceptions of landscape see Byrne et al 2001; Veale 2001; English 2000; 2002).

John Barrett (1999) gives a more expansive definition of cultural landscape, as:

the entire surface over which people moved and within which they congregated. That surface was given meaning as people acted upon the world within the context of the various demands and obligations which acted upon them. Such actions took place within a

certain tempo and at certain locales. Thus landscape, its form constructed from natural and artificial features, became a culturally meaningful resource through its routine occupancy.

This definition emphasises those attachments formed by people to places through their routine habitation and use of these places (see also Merleau-Ponty 1962; Casey 2000; Ingold 2000; Gosden 1994; Tilley 1994), and the relationship between people’s mental landscape and the physical world. Although these definitions differ in emphasis, they share a focus on the transformative nature of human action within the context of the natural world. This is similar to what Soja defines as the ‘thirdspace’ approach: it views landscape as simultaneously real and imagined, so that the object of study becomes the meaning of the spatiality of human life.



FIGURE 1.3 Kerry and Co, ‘A Devon Herd’, c 1884–1917. A cultural landscape? (Glass negative, full plate; courtesy Powerhouse Museum: obj no 85/1284-291)

The problems in such divergent definitions of landscapes have suggested the need for more practical terminology and working definitions for cultural heritage assessment, management and conservation. UNESCO has developed specific criteria for three categories of cultural landscapes (Cleere 1995):

- 1 Clearly defined landscapes are designed and created intentionally, and include formal gardens and parklands and associated structures and monuments.
- 2 Organically evolved landscapes are the result of a particular economic, religious or administrative effort that subsequently develops in response to the natural environment. These include relic or fossil landscapes such as the archaeological remains of drainage channels, and continuing landscapes such as rice cultivation terraces in South-East Asia.
- 3 Associative cultural landscapes are places that have been attributed religious or social significance, such as Uluru.

Ashmore and Knapp (1999) have taken these definitions a step further, and have developed interpretive descriptors to distinguish between them. They recognise three categories of cultural landscapes: constructed, conceptualised and ideational landscapes. They further developed a series of themes to take into account these theoretical and terminological considerations:

- + landscape as memory
- + landscape as identity
- + landscape as social order
- + landscape as transformation.

These themes better recognise the many different active ways in which humans engage with, and have their lives ordered by, cultural landscapes.

DEEP ECOLOGY, 'WILDERNESS' AND LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

The second aspect of pastoral heritage includes the impact of pastoral land use on the landscape itself. Although such impacts have often been understood as land degradation, these 'scars on the landscape' form an important trace for understanding the history of human–environmental interactions in the pastoral industry. This form of heritage is made problematic, however, by definitions of landscape that try to distinguish between the cultural and the natural.

An opposition between 'natural' and 'cultural' landscapes is explicit in beliefs that derive from movements such as 'deep ecology'. 'Deep ecology' (or biocentric egalitarianism), a term coined by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess (1973; 1994; see also Seed et al 1988), utilises a spiritual or 'self-actualising' approach to the issue of the relationship between human beings and the natural world, challenging the 'human centredness' of the dominant Western world view (van de Veer and Pierce 1994; Devall and Sessions 1985). In emphasising the duality of 'humans' and 'nature', and expressing this duality as a quasi-mystical or moral duality (Bookshin 1994), deep ecology requires the existence of non-cultural landscapes as a fundamental part of its doctrine.

Deep ecology (and similar notions such as 'Gaian consciousness' and 'eco-theology') has been a powerful force in the environmental movement, both in Australia as well as overseas. It has influenced different land management agencies' approaches to natural and cultural heritage management (see McIntyre-Tamwoy 2001) and nature conservation and land rehabilitation. Critics of deep ecology note that the concepts developed by the movement 'do not help move us forward as a global society faced by critical choices between varying and often conflicting ... values' (Hurwich 1986).

Deep ecology produces a view of nature that is at odds with many people's viewpoints or understandings of landscapes and the natural world. The idea of a purely natural landscape that is not in some way cultural is difficult to comprehend for many Australians. Aboriginal people, for example, would understand all of the 'natural' environment as textured and layered with social meaning and value. As Rose (1996) explains:

A definition of wilderness which excludes the active presence of humanity ... miss[es] the whole point of the nourishing Australian terrains. Here on this continent, there is no place where the feet of Aboriginal humanity have not preceded those of the settler. Nor is there any place where the country was not once fashioned and kept productive by Aboriginal people's land management practices. There is no place without history, no place that has not been imaginatively grasped by song, dance and design, no place where traditional owners cannot see the imprint of the sacred nation.

The concept of 'wilderness' itself is a cultural construction with a complex history, derived in part from the philosophy of Henry David Thoreau and a complex set of reactions

to modernism by Romantic poets and artists in late eighteenth-century Europe (Nash 1973; Oelschlaeger 1991; Valenti 1996). The mythology and ideology of 'natural' landscapes as socially constructed and conceptualised spaces has also been the subject of study by both geographers and landscape theorists (eg Wilson 1992).

Certainly, the idea of 'wilderness' has changed dramatically through time. What would broadly be considered to be a 'modern' understanding of the concept of wilderness with regard to natural resource management developed during the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth century. As Spence (1999) outlines in his history of Yellowstone, Glacier and Yosemite National Parks Service in the United States of America, the establishment of these wilderness parks during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries required the active creation of uninhabited spaces. This involved the forced removal of native American people to reservations, alongside the development of a vision of primordial Nature (with a capital 'N') in opposition to culture.

These parks acted as the models for the establishment of wilderness parks and protected areas throughout the New World. In New South Wales, important figures in the early nature conservation movement such as Myles Dunphy used pamphlets produced for the US National Parks Service during the 1920s to promote the idea of the development of a New South Wales national parks service (Charles 1998: 10). Modern wildlife conservation philosophy is deeply rooted in the doctrine that the world of nature is separate from the world of humans (Ingold 2000: 67).

It is now widely established that interactions between Aboriginal people and the Australian environment have had a major formative impact on the Australian landscape. Key ethnographic descriptions of Aboriginal peoples' use of fire (much of this material is summarised in Head 1994) have shown that by doing so they changed landscapes both physically and socially. These ecological interactions – most famously termed 'fire-stick farming' (Jones 1969) – have had a major influence on the landscapes of Australia. This is only one example of the complex human–environmental interactions that were played out over thousands of years of Aboriginal occupation of the Australian environment. Thus all 'natural' landscapes, in the way in which they existed at the time of first non-indigenous settlement, have been created and formed by a human presence, and socialised by the detailed human geography of Aboriginal hunter–gatherers.

In this book I argue for a broader understanding of 'landscape', as the context in which human history occurs, as well as being an integral part of that history. I have intentionally abandoned the term 'cultural landscape' in favour of the word 'landscape' itself to emphasise the impossible division between the cultural and natural. Landscapes are not passive; they are actively involved in negotiating, and being negotiated by, the course of human histories (Gosden 1994). Landscapes are also contested spaces (Bender and Winer 2001), where conflict occurs over different understandings of place, and where maps and embodied experiences tell different 'spatial stories' (de Certeau 1984). For this reason, landscapes are not only important in preserving traces of the heritage of the pastoral industry, but an important conceptual tool in the analysis of the relationship between people and places in the history of the pastoral industry.

SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE AND THE NEW HERITAGE PARADIGM

Shared Landscapes emphasises the social values of cultural heritage in line with other work undertaken by the Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW) (Byrne et al 2001; see also Johnston 1994). This work critiqued the lack of assessment of social values by cultural heritage management agencies and practitioners in New South Wales and Australia. Attempts to redress this imbalance have been tempered by an understanding that cultural heritage also constitutes a form of social action for local communities.

Social Significance: A Discussion Paper (Byrne et al 2001) makes important connections between heritage and local identity, noting (following Appadurai 1996), that communities use heritage as a part of the 'work' which maintains their effective links with particular localities. 'Heritage' is not something that is self-defining; it is defined with reference to social action that selectively commodifies and emphasises particular places as important (Pearce 2000).

Part of this process of selection relates to how heritage is made to relate to, and speak for, the history of a community. It is not reasonable to think of heritage as something that is given; it is created and maintained in a constant tension between the local and the nation-state. Heritage is a discourse that is mobilised for different social and political ends. In the same way that heritage can be used by local people in a process of collective memorialisation, it can also be used by the nation-state to perpetuate settler-colonial mythologies (Curthoys 2000). So there is a constant tension between the local and the nation-state, in which the assessment of the social values of heritage to local communities becomes an important way of engaging with heritage as a form of local, social action (Appadurai 2001).

HERITAGE AND THE 'LIFEWORLD'

My understanding of the role of heritage as a form of local, social action has been informed by Habermas's (1984; 1987) concept of 'communicative action' and the *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld; see eg Wilkie 2001 on *Lebenswelt* and its application to archaeology). *Lebenswelt* describes collections of daily behaviours and communicative actions that serve to link individuals in a society. Through daily experience, practices of the lifeworld become normalised. Individuals interpret any situation through an analysis of the social actions of others. Individual agents are able to draw on their personal experiences to determine how they will negotiate any given situation, but are limited in their choice through the requirement to communicate with others.

Thus, culture is produced and reproduced by a desire to communicate with others, and shared, collective memorialisations of the past form one sort of communicative action. Through such memorialisation, meanings can be conveyed and new meanings can be developed by the simultaneous appeal of heritage to the past and present *Lebenswelt*. It is heritage – as a representation of 'our' past through reference to shared experience and knowledge of the world – that allows it to be used as a form of communicative, social action within local communities.

HERITAGE AND THE COLONIAL CONTEXT

In working within the context of a settler colonial nation on aspects of the history and implications of colonialism in Australia, we need to be mindful of the entrenched discourses of colonialism and how they have mobilised academic discourses as part of the colonial project (Fabian 1983; Minh-Ha 1989; Moore 1990; Smith 1999). Thomas (1994: 192) argues for an anthropology of colonialism that examines its:

localised, practically mediated expressions, through projects constituted through discursive agency rather than by individual historical actors or dehistoricised discourses ... an 'anthropology of colonialism' cannot situate 'the colonial' as an external object of study; this lack of comfortable distance from the power structures and the discourses being analysed seems appropriate, given the continuing energy of various colonial forms, such as those of settler primitivism.

The focus on the relationship between heritage and colonial history in two localised, community-based studies issues in part from my interest in taking up Thomas's challenge to examine the way in which colonialism was both enacted and subverted at a local scale. A secondary dimension of this is the ability to study how the mutual heritage of colonial relations is used in similar and different ways by local settler and Aboriginal communities as a response to these localised colonial histories.

Social values include a broad range of socio-cultural values of heritage, including spiritual, symbolic/cultural and political values (Johnston 1994). However, my discussion revolves principally around social attachments, or the way in which heritage contributes to the social cohesion, sense of identity and sense of place of a local individual or community (Mason 2002). People draw on the shared historic meaning of heritage to build cultural and social affiliation in the present. Part of this shared meaning will relate to ongoing traditions that connect people with the past, while other parts will relate to the creation of new cultural value for an item in the present. It is the local attachments to heritage which drive my discussion of social values in this book.

MEMORY, ARCHAEOLOGY AND HERITAGE

Recording interviews on audio tape, and in particular the recording of life histories, formed an important component of this book. There is now a wide literature that examines the relationship between history and memory (eg Connerton 1989; le Goff 1992; Tonkin 1992; papers in Darian-Smith and Hamilton 1994). It is important to acknowledge the process by which oral histories that have been collected for this book have been edited to construct a particular argument. Thus the voices of the individuals who have contributed their oral history to the project have merged with my own voice as the narrator (Douglass 1994: 231) to form the narrative which constitutes *Shared Landscapes*.

Individual memories become collective memories in a number of different ways. Our own memories are constantly mediated by other people's representations of the past. It is this dynamic between individual and collective memory that allows us to 'remember' a past that exists outside of our own temporal or spatial life histories, but which is as much a part of our own lifeworld as if we lived it ourselves (Darian-Smith 1994: 137). As Hamilton (1994: 17) notes, two distinct streams of analysis of memory have emerged in historical studies. The first, concerned predominantly with individual memory, emerged from life history and group biography writing, while the second has been largely concerned with the collective (often national) monumental memorialisation of the past. And yet, as she demonstrates in her discussion of oral histories of Second World War POW camp internees, the public airing of previously hidden histories such as these can produce a strong sense of collective identification with them.

Certainly there has been a strong confessional element to the process of oral history collection in the production of this book, particularly in terms of Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people being exposed, sometimes for the first time, to different perspectives on a shared past. Within communities themselves, people who may not have experienced the history of the places under study in their own lifetimes, now actively share in a collective understanding of this history and its heritage. So these tensions between individual and collective memories emerged within the process of writing the book itself, and will continue to be in tension in response to its fossilising a particular view about the past. The active engagement of researcher and community members encourages an engagement with the writing of the past which stands as social action (or *praxis*) in the present.

HERITAGE AS MEMORY

Another dynamic that runs through this book is the relationship between traces of the past and the collective memorialisation of the past in the present. ‘Material memories’ (Kwint et al 1999; Hallam and Hockey 2001; Boriç 2003), that sense of ‘being-affected-by-the-past’ (Ricoeur 1988: 207), form an important aspect of the significance of cultural heritage. Landscapes and material objects act on the body to evoke particular kinds of memories, which cannot be invoked in their absence (Connerton 1989; Kùchler 1993; 1999). As Stewart (1999: 19) notes, ‘the body bears a somatic memory of its encounters with what is outside of it’. In this way, objects and landscapes can be thought to have agency and act in ways that are person-like (Gell 1998).

‘Story trekking’ – visiting and mapping places mentioned in oral histories with those same story tellers (after Green et al 2003: 378) – formed an important way of both tapping into deep, embodied memories about relationships to place, as well as gaining a more thorough, phenomenological understanding of these places. Many of the features recorded during these site visits were ephemeral traces, unlikely to have been given significance except in dialogue with the lived memories of the former pastoral workers and their families. The fact that these traces are so ephemeral is often the reason for an area’s proclamation as a National Park with a relatively unmodified ‘natural’ landscape; this makes it even more important to record these places and features in conjunction with people who have lived experience of them. While leaving traces may be ‘the primal phenomenon of all the habits that are involved in inhabiting a place’ (Benjamin 1999: 472), the experience of dwelling in space (cf Ingold 2000) creates a link between stories and spatial practices (de Certeau 1984: 121). As the influential spatial thinker Merleau-Ponty argues (1962), the ‘human body provides the fundamental mediation point between thought and the world’ (cf Tilley 1994: 14).

Like exploring memory, archaeological approaches to the recording of heritage sites have their own unique methods and lines of inquiry. One of these involves meticulously excavating archaeological deposits to retrieve information about sites. In contrast, given the landscape focus of this study, I have been influenced instead by field survey approaches that concentrate on the archaeological remains on the surface of the land. There is a long tradition of such archaeological field survey which has its roots in European ‘field walking’ schools of archaeology and in the study of prehistoric settlement patterns using ground and aerial reconnaissance (Trigger 1989). The methods I have employed have drawn on this tradition and the new spatial technologies of Geographic Information Systems and Differential Global Positioning System data recorders (see Chapter 3).

HERITAGE AS COMMUNITY BUILDING

While much archaeological research is done by a group of ‘specialists’ without any personal connections to the places under study, the recording with community members allowed a deeper understanding of these places, and an examination of the ways in which heritage (as physical traces of the past) is actively invoked and used by local communities. In recording traces of the heritage of the pastoral industry, I have been as interested in the way people relate to these traces in the present, as in the information they can give us about what people did in the past. As mentioned earlier, it is in this area that archaeology – or the study of traces of the past – intersects with heritage – as the study of the perception of the traces of the past in the present. In this sense, heritage becomes a study of the ‘afterlife’ of things (Bradley and Williams 1998; Bradley 2002) – the way in which traces of the past become memorialised and incorporated into people’s contemporary social worlds.

HERITAGE AS FORGETTING

Equally important in a discussion of memorialisation is the act of collective forgetting (see papers in Forty and Kùchler 1999). In the same way that a memorial (or memorialisation of the past) mobilises particular discourses about the past-in-the-present, so should forgetting be seen as an active process which creates particular forms of silences about the past. The citation or quotation of the past in the present can be considered to be one of a series of mnemonic practices that work on the body to reproduce cultural norms (or in Bourdieu’s language, the *habitus*; see Pearson and Shanks 2001; Boriç 2003). Both remembering and forgetting, as forms of active engagement with particular cultural phenomena, thus have the potential to involve themselves in processes of cultural change. The relationship between physical things and both remembering and forgetting, as cultural processes in the conceptualisation and interpretation of cultural heritage, will form another central theme of the case-studies in this book.

CHAPTER 2

The social and spatial dimensions of pastoralism

This chapter outlines a history of the pastoral industry in New South Wales (drawing particularly on work produced by historians for the shared histories project: see Cole 2001; Zilber 2002). It emphasises the spatial dimensions of land tenure and use, and provides a social history of the industry, especially the relationships between Aboriginal people and settlers on the pastoral frontier. This is by no means an exhaustive account of the history of the pastoral industry in New South Wales, nor of the two main issues. Excellent accounts of the historical geography of New South Wales which focus on the pastoral industry have been written by King (1950; 1957) and Jeans (1972). Heather Goodall's (1995; 1996; 1999) work on Aboriginal people in the pastoral economy of New South Wales also provided an important source for this study. The account presented here provides an essential background to the case-studies discussed in Parts II and III.

This chapter covers particularly the period 1788 to 1930, although the period 1930 to 1993 is also discussed briefly. At first glance this may seem slightly odd, since the case-studies in Parts II and III heavily emphasise the period of 'lived memory' in the mid to late twentieth century. However, the establishment of these properties occurred as a result of a complex set of state-wide policies and legislation which had their roots in the early years of European settlement. For this reason, it is important to understand the background not only of the broader history of pastoralism in New South Wales in the period after the Robertson Land Acts of 1861 – which is most relevant to the case-studies – but also the development of pre-1860s land regulation. Similarly, it is important to comprehend the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people that developed in the early years of the pastoral industry to understand the context within which the later working relationships discussed in Parts II and III developed.

PRE-COLONIAL PASTURES

Before the British invasion in 1788, Aboriginal societies of south-eastern Australia had developed a range of land management strategies (eg Howitt 1904; Hiatt 1984; Parker 1992; Lourandos 1997). Aboriginal groups belonging to the fertile coastal lands, such as the Dharug, Gundungurra and Kuring-gai around what became known as Sydney, and the Bandjalung of the far northern rivers, were living almost sedentary lives on relatively small, closely settled holdings.

Those groups which lived to the west of the mountain ranges were the custodians of much larger tracts of land. They created vast grasslands by 'firestick farming' and moved over these lands to a consistent schedule, collecting and storing grass-seeds, and hunting kangaroos, emus and other game they fostered on these grass 'pastures'.

The invasion of the grasslands of central New South Wales by squatters in the 1820s and 1830s, hastened by the international demand for Australian wool, was one of the most rapid in Australia (Goodall 1995: 65). Aboriginal plant and animal resources were compromised and seasonal movement across country was constrained as thousands of sheep were mustered across the Great Dividing Range. Military and private parties, engaged in the 'pacification' of the western plains, met with armed Aboriginal resistance. This was most furious on the grasslands of Myall Creek, Waterloo Creek and Hospital Creek, where some of the most well known, but not the only, massacres of large groups of Aboriginal people occurred (Blomfield 1981; Millis 1991; Reece 1974).

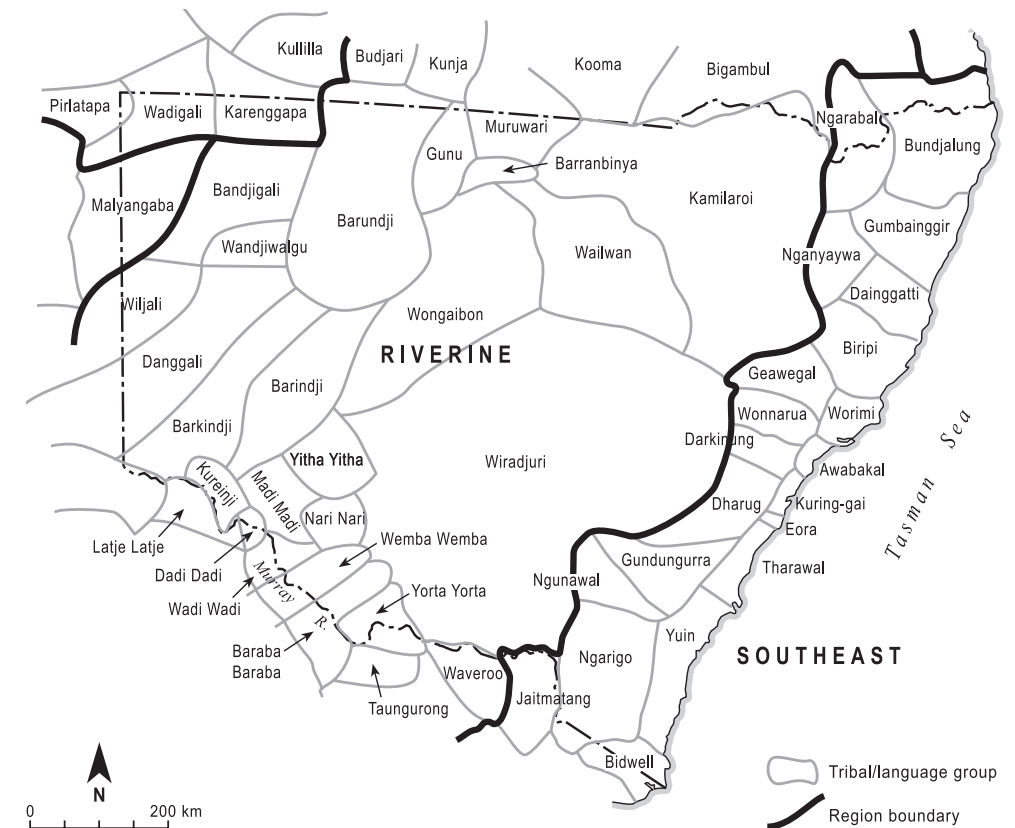


FIGURE 2.1 Aboriginal language boundaries in New South Wales, c 1788. (After Horton 1994)

In 1788, Aboriginal societies had a complex land tenure system in which responsibilities for tracts of land rested in knowledge of the songs, myths, dances and ceremonies associated with particular places, and the ancestors who gave these places creative power in the Dreamtime (Howitt 1904; Mathews 1904; Kohen 1993; more generally Berndt and Berndt 1988: 135ff). Rights to land could be inherited from parents (primarily through the father, although one's mother's country was also of importance), through conception places, birthplaces, initiation places or naming places, or through personal or collective totemic associations. Individual connections to land existed within a wider network of cultural and economic exchange.

These land tenure systems were not static, but involved competitive exchange cycles and dynamic expansions and contractions of territorial estates over time. Harry Lourandos (1997), in a summary of the archaeological data for temperate south-eastern Australia,

suggests that increasingly complex socio-demographic patterns – including changes in population size, density and dispersal – towards more sedentary practices and sophisticated inter-group relations developed over the last 3500 years. The consequently evolving methods of landscape manipulation and cultivation, including the targeted exploitation of staple foods that allowed large ceremonial gatherings and inter-group meetings (eg Bowdler 1981; Flood 1980; Ross 1985), formed an integral part of these developments. Many of these trajectories of change continued into the post-invasion period, and still echo through time to structure the life histories of Aboriginal Australians today (Beckett 1988). Land played a central role in Aboriginal people's lifeworld: as religious text, economic resource, genealogical tree, and historical manuscript.

Land was actively used and managed by its Aboriginal owners, for whom its productivity was not assumed, but depended on its custodians looking after it in proper ways which were inscribed and performed in ceremonies (Reay 1949; Mutitjulu community 1991; Rose 1996). In pre-colonial Australia, there were many techniques used to regularise and increase the numbers of game and plants. Information about appropriate harvesting times, or restrictions on hunting game to ensure its continued survival, were passed on in songs and oral tradition (Goodall 1996). For Aboriginal people, the cultivation of plants and animals was not only an economic activity but a profoundly religious one. Thus the idea of land management was not foreign to the Aboriginal peoples at the time of invasion, and many would assist the first pastoralists with land clearing and would later form an integral part of the pastoral industry in New South Wales.

DECONSTRUCTING HISTORIES OF THE INVASION

It is customary for many histories of southern, 'settled' Australia to begin with statements about the previous existence of Aboriginal people, and then construct a narrative about the effect of European contact which frames a story of the decline and eventual demise of Aboriginal culture. This is part of a broader settler mythology that associates white invasion with the end of Aboriginal culture and heralds the beginning of a story of settler progress and subjugation – a proverbial 'out with the old and in with the new' (Thomas 1994; 1999).

Despite an organised, militaristic response by some European settlers to Aboriginal resistance, and even while these massacres were occurring, other Aboriginal people and settlers had begun the process of negotiating with each other. Such negotiation, when it occurred between the two groups, led to the development of the type of mutual histories later discussed in Parts II and III. As Gaynor MacDonald notes:

The tendency to see indigenous people in south-eastern Australia as little other than products of the colonial encounter has encouraged 'race' and 'colonialism' to be seen as more significant analytical concepts than, for instance, 'culture' which might focus on indigenous experiences, meanings and practices rather than just those framed by black/white relations (1998: 167).

Such 'master narratives' actually fit within a series of competing discourses about land and colonial history which go to heart of what this book is about. Although the invasion forced great changes and enormous losses of life onto Aboriginal people in New South Wales, they were not 'wiped out'. They immediately began drawing on their cultural and economic traditions to negotiate a place for themselves in what had become a transformed world. Part of this process involved concessions to the new lifeworld in which they found themselves, while another involved the continuation of collective identity – a process involving equal parts of both accommodation and resistance (eg Creamer 1988; MacDonald 1988; 1998; Morris 1988; 1989; Reynolds 1982; 1990).

CODIFYING THE LAND

From 1788, the British colonisers sought to understand and codify the new land they occupied (Reynolds 1987). Exploration of the country was achieved by official government surveyors as well as private pastoralists in search of fertile grazing land. Official surveys followed the successful American example of grid networks (Bartlett 1974: 68–71). Maps were drawn to formalise the landscape, with emphasis upon vegetation, land formations and essential water sources.

Language was fundamental in stoking the desire to expand the horizons. Consequently, glowing descriptions of the terrain by explorers and surveyors depended upon how favourable the season had been to the landscape. In contrast, language used in describing the frontiers of the United States cautioned against settling west of the Mississippi. The restrictive mythology of a 'Great American Desert' had been firmly entrenched in popular conception for over two centuries until it was overcome with the establishment of communities in places such as Oklahoma and California (Greenway 1972: 42–43). The geography of Australia, and the preponderance of natural resources and settlement along thin coastal bands, drew it apart from the American experience of an adaptive and expansive frontier (Alexander 1969: 26–30).

Relations with Aboriginal people during exploration expeditions in Australia ranged from friendly to menacing. Often official, government-funded explorers such as John Oxley and Thomas Mitchell utilised the knowledge of Aboriginal people in their surveys. Private explorers such as Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson and William Charles Wentworth, who successfully traversed the Blue Mountains, were equally indebted to Aboriginal guides who, perhaps unwittingly, enabled the appropriation of land further westward (Jeans 1972: 31–45).

Explorers were explicitly briefed to report back on the suitability of the lands they encountered for grazing and agriculture. Their encounters with the land were always tempered by the concepts of *terra australis* and *terra nullius*, the blank lands to the south on which the desires and actions of these white explorers and their cartographers were inscribed (Ryan 1996). Indeed, the familiar 'otherness' with which medieval historians had populated their maps of the South Land was nothing compared to what the first explorers would see. These independent explorers and official surveyors continued the cycle of geographical theory in Australia which had begun long before its discovery with the conjectured 'Great Southern Land'; the long prophesised landmass that was said to balance the globe.

Land acquisition and exploitation were the primary motivations of both new colonists and the Crown. But land was equally important to Aboriginal people. While European settlers believed that Aboriginal people had no terminology with which to describe territorial rights to land, their land was integrally connected with a sense of identity and place through common laws. Later, the land was to become equally important to non-indigenous identity and 'sense of place' in ways that mirrored the feelings of Aboriginal people.

The description of these unknown lands was essential to the process of claiming ownership and distribution through grants or bills of sale. Crown regulations called for land to be initially surveyed into rectangular blocks, a characteristic successfully implemented in America. Maps identified natural vegetation and grazing country in the pursuit of tabulating the pastoral profitability of the landscape. From 1828 to 1834 Thomas Mitchell worked on completing the first published topographic map of the colony (Baker 1997). This map provided comprehensive details of the natural environment, leaving no doubt of the expected adversity to the prospective landholders (Mitchell, quoted in Andrews 1992):

In New South Wales, the natural features are of so formidable a character, and occupy so much of the Surface, that the Lands of Settlers are, in very many cases, isolated and remote from each other; rocky, impassable ranges and barren tracts intervene, and the Survey of Such Features of the Country, as Rivers or lofty ranges, does not appear more desirable for

the political division of the Country than it has been for the measurement of each portion of granted Land in its proper place, or, in other words, for the purpose of determining the extent and value of what lands still remain waste and unoccupied.

Maps like Mitchell's inspired the opening of the landscape to further European invasion beyond the limits of location (discussed in detail below). However, the bureaucratic reality of the settlers' property thirst was that the colonial government could not keep up with the demand for land, despite the imposed limits of location. By the 1820s, much farming land remained unsurveyed. Settler expansion continued, with or without the consent of the colonial government, and encountered varying forms of Aboriginal resistance as it occurred (Lines 1991: 50–53).



FIGURE 2.2 Thomas Mitchell, 'Part of New South Wales from the Summit of Jelore', T & W Boone, London, 1839. Mitchell's map of the colony played an important role in paving the way for pastoral expansion and settlement. Illustrations such of this one fueled the imperial and colonial desires of the colony. (Courtesy National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an9941601)

LAND OCCUPATION 1788–1850

As the first governor of New South Wales, one of the responsibilities entrusted to Arthur Phillip in 1792 was the power to grant land (Roberts 1968). Those entitled to land grants were free settlers, military officers and officials, ex-marines and ex-convicts who were of 'good conduct and disposition to industry'. Pastoral enterprise was encouraged by allocating all First Fleet officers and officials 2 acres of land (but with no legal security of ownership), and 'giving' them two convicts to help with clearing and cultivation. Fees for land grants did not have to be paid until 1825. After this date it was still possible to obtain a free land grant, although the grant was not to exceed 2560 acres or, unless in the immediate vicinity of a town or village, to be less than 320 acres (State Records NSW 2000).

There were many men who benefited from government generosity in granting land in the early years of settlement, or who purchased freehold in the settled districts of the new colony as it began to prosper. The governor was instructed to make no further free grants (except those already promised) after 1831, when a new land policy was adopted. Revenue from the sale of land was to go toward the immigration of labourers. Following this, land was sold by public auction without restrictions being placed on the amount to be acquired. After 1831, the only land made available for sale was within the 'nineteen counties'. These were administrative units into which the settled districts of New South Wales were divided. The underlying motivation was the development of county towns in each unit, although few of them at this time held populations large enough to sustain one (Jeans 1972: 106).



FIGURE 2.3 The nineteen counties and the limits of location in 1829 and 1830.

On 5 September 1826, a government order allowed Governor Darling to create the 'limits of location' within which settlers could take up land. A further order on 14 October 1829 increased the area that was to be settled to include the 'nineteen counties'. From the earliest days of the colony there was some unauthorised occupation of Crown land both within and outside the limits of location and the nineteen counties. Various acts and regulations were in operation from 1824 in an attempt to curb this type of land occupation, which was referred to as 'squatting'. As a result of these legislative measures, authorised occupations such as grazing leases and depasturing licences were introduced to regularise settlement on Crown land. The 'squatters' push for new lands to graze their sheep beyond the limits of location marks the beginning of Australia's pastoral industry.

THE EARLY PASTORAL INDUSTRY

Pastoralism, rather than agriculture, emerged in this early period as the dominant land-based industry for over a century in the colony of New South Wales. Governor Phillip had hoped to establish an agrarian system of small blocks of land for emancipists, thereby guaranteeing the colony self-sufficiency, but his vision had not been fully implemented by the end of his tenure in 1792. From the early years, land was monopolised by military officers such as John Macarthur who established the wool industry. The healthy trade in wool with England, and the fact that it represented a convenient conduit for convict labour (King 1950), guaranteed the early profitability of pastoralism. Attempts were made by successive governors to encourage small landed settlements, but the profits of the wool trade far exceeded the profits of agriculture.



FIGURE 2.4 Joseph Lycett, 'The residence of John MacArthur esquire near Parramatta, New South Wales', J Souter, London, 1 April 1825. MacArthur's 'Elizabeth Farm' represented the pastoral aspirations of the new colony. (Courtesy National Library of Australia: nla.pic-na7690900)

Until the 1830s, cheap convict labour had been relied upon to work the land and stock. This reliance was eventually replaced by a new class of specialised workers composed of emancipists and free-born colonials or 'currency lads' (Morrissey 1967: 61). They built homes, managed stations, cleared trees, trapped rabbits, drove cattle, sheared sheep, broke

horses, laid fences, sleepers and cables, sank shafts and dug dams – changing both the physical and socio-political topography of the landscape in the process.

Ultimately it was the colonial government that made the development and expansion of the pastoral industry possible, with its laws and financing of population centres, transport and communication infrastructure. This was in marked contrast to the invasion of frontier regions in America, which had been achieved largely by private capitalist ventures, solidified by the slave trade (Grimshaw et al 1994: 113). Accordingly, Fitzpatrick has argued that squatting in Australia produced a 'big man's frontier', as opposed to the American equivalent of the 'small man's frontier' (Fitzpatrick, cited in Alexander 1969: 36).

REGULATING THE 'BIG MAN'S FRONTIER'

The regulation of land tenure in colonial New South Wales can be interpreted as an elongated process by the colonial liberal urban middle classes to destabilise the conservative squatters' monopoly on pastoral holdings in Crown land. Kercher (1995: 52) has cited colonial land laws as evidence that Australian colonial law was not simply a mildly modified version of British law; without the handicap of English feudal rights, Australian land reform laws were persistently at the forefront of social and economic development for many decades.

The politics of the land issue and the exploitation of land tenure drew attention away from the longer-term question of responsible and productive settlement of the colony (McMichael 1984: 213–216). Pastoralists profited from government land legislation that encouraged capitalism and burgeoning markets both in Australia and overseas. Meanwhile, free selectors found their agricultural pursuits hampered by listless domestic markets. Their small holdings and lack of finance made it impossible to make a living by grazing cattle (Burroughs 1867: 110–112).

Prior to the first squatting act in 1827, squatters – who by definition unlawfully occupied Crown lands – had been allowed access to grazing lands in the settled areas without the security of land title. Once the nineteen countries had been expanded in the 1830s, the closer settlement policy was reviewed and legitimised. By 1831 all land grants in the settled districts ceased, by order of the Crown in the Ripon Regulations. Instead, proceeds of land sales and auctions were to be funnelled into financing a concentrated and uniform pattern of settlement, the promotion of centralised agriculture, and the emigration of free settlers to Australia (McMichael 1984: 79–86). While land grants had been initially established to ensure the self-sufficiency of the colony, conditions of residence and improvement were not strictly followed. The 1828 census revealed that while 3 million acres had been granted, less than 10 per cent of this total had been cleared for cultivation (Else-Mitchell 1974: 4–6).

During the 1830s, the nineteen countries represented the boundaries of colonial settlement and surveillance. This boundary soon became redundant with demands for the expansion of the colonial capitalist economy. The wool trade with England had already been established during the 1810s and continued to expand exponentially (Lines 1991: 68–70; Jeans 1972: 97). From 1831 to 1855, wool replaced whaling and sealing as the colony's staple export, and in turn the pastoral industry offered employment opportunities to emancipated convicts and free settlers (Morrissey 1967: 55; Burroughs 1867: 137). Australia supplied Britain with 20 per cent of its imported wool in 1840, rising to 53 per cent by 1850, and effectively replacing long-term Anglo-German markets (Buckley and Wheelwright 1992: 80).

LAND AND LABOUR

The new mercantile relationship with Europe transformed imperial policy towards the colony as a site for surplus English labour rather than convicts (McMichael 1984: 79). Yet, so appealing were sheep farming profits in the 1830s that demand for labour soon outweighed supply (Burroughs 1867: 112). In later years there were successive attempts to curb the land monopoly of the squatters, however squatters enjoyed support from the merchant classes. Both were bonded by their mutual interests in the success of the pastoral industry markets (Buckley and Wheelwright 1992: 92).

The New South Wales colonial (and later state) government's future changes to pastoral industry legislation should be seen as long-sighted attempts to increase the number of players in the pastoral industry and ultimately the colony's economy, and should not be interpreted as attempts to sabotage the wool industry. Indeed, the colonial government was soon faced with the uncomfortable situation of an oversupply of land, increasing values, and a labour shortfall. Governor Bourke, with his Crown Lands Occupation Act, recognised the squatting phenomena for the first time by issuing licences costing £10 to pastoralists allowing them to use land for grazing beyond the nineteen counties.

After 1831, the economic administration of New South Wales was influenced by 'Wakefieldian' ideas of land prices subsidising emigration, thus providing surplus labour for the pastoral industry and ensuring land utilisation. Land sales (or the 'upset price') rose from 5 shillings per acre in 1831, to 12 shillings in 1838, and 20 shillings in 1842 (Allen 1956: 55–56). Free grants were abandoned with the *Australian Lands Act* 1842, which also made provision for the allocation of one half of revenue raised from land sales towards assisted immigration (King 1957: 50). Crown land sales provided unsurpassed internal revenue, in place of foreign borrowing, that would influence economic and social policy throughout the nineteenth century.

Such was the nature of the pastoral industry that its contenders comprised a limited class base. To give an example of the surplus finance required to become a grazier, Buckley and Wheelwright estimated that in 1838 – without calculating running costs – the sum of £1000 could secure 600 sheep. The typical rural wage of £20–30 made this a financial impossibility for the majority of colonial migrants (Buckley and Wheelwright 1992: 81).

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND PASTORAL SETTLEMENT

As settlers ventured beyond the limits of location, Aboriginal people targeted their stock as new sources of food. The penalties for attacks on stock, or indeed settlers, were in many cases extreme. In 1824, Aboriginal resistance to pastoralism west of the mountains was met with a proclamation of martial law or 'summary justice'; the NSW colonial government's strongest ever military response to pastoralist complaints (see Zilber 2001: 13–15). The northern regions such as the Manning, Clarence and Macleay valleys were the setting for sustained Aboriginal 'depredations' for nearly half a century that were lower in intensity than conflict on the western plains, yet more protracted (Goodall 1996: 29; see Chapter 5 this volume).

The uneasy relations on the frontiers, and the integral relationship between Aboriginal people and land legislation were apparent in Governor Gipps' 1839 Act, which called for the establishment of Crown Land Commissioners. The commissioners were intended to maintain the peace between large and small-scale squatters and Aboriginal groups, and they were granted the power to revoke the land licences of those proven guilty of attacks on Aboriginal people.



FIGURE 2.5 Frank Hurley, 'Mob of sheep among the trees at Berida Station, Gilgandra New South Wales', c 1910–1962. By 1839 there was almost as much stock roaming the landscape south of the old limits of location as there was within. (Courtesy National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an23398088)

However, the impartiality of the commissioners was doubtful. Massie, Crown Lands Commissioner for the Macleay region, was suspected of taking part in reprisal attacks upon Aboriginal people in his area (see Chapter 5). In July 1841, Governor Gipps sent a circular to each commissioner asking them to submit a yearly report on the condition of Aboriginal people in their district. These reports reveal a preoccupation with frontier Aboriginal–settler relations: cattle and sheep spearing; whether the local Aboriginal population had been 'subdued'; the willingness of Aboriginal people to engage in farming and pastoral work; and the emergence of a group of 'half-caste' children and whether or not they needed to be removed from their 'tribes' (see further discussion in Chapter 5). Commissioner Massie particularly sought to discourage 'intimacy' between Aboriginal people and settlers, while at the same time paradoxically seeking to encourage Aboriginal labour on pastoral properties, and undertaking a program of 'adopting' half-caste boys to work as interpreters: 'I have rather discouraged the existence of any great intimacy between the Black and White population ... maltreatment of their Gins [sic] ... I am aware too often is the cause of these aggressions' (Annual report respecting Aborigines in this district to Governor Gipps, 1843: ML A1233).

In addition to issues of relationships between pastoralists and Aboriginal people, the 'uncivilising' effects of the nomadic lifestyle associated with the pastoral frontier emerged as a central colonial anxiety. Those who were opposed to squatting, such as the secretary of state, foresaw problems for the civilising fibre of the infant colony: 'nothing would be more unfortunate than the formation of a race of Men, wandering with their cattle over the Extensive Region of the Interior, and losing, like the descendants of the Spaniards of the Pampas of South America, almost all traces of their original civilisation' (quoted in Jeans 1972: 115).

By 1839 there was almost as much stock roaming the landscape outside of the old limits of location as there was within. The rapid expansion was the product of three major land-related influences: the 1836 Crown lands legislation; Mitchell's map of the colony; and his 1836 account of his explorations (King 1957: 48). By 1846 the Imperial British *Waste Lands Occupation Act* ushered in security of 14-year pastoral leases in unsettled areas with the option of purchase at any time (Kercher 1995: 118–119). But land laws alone could not assure the colony of a financially buoyant pastoral industry. Economic historian Brian Fitzpatrick views the Forbes Act of 1834 as providing the legislative backbone of the pastoral movement because it effectively limited and codified the maximum rate of interest (8 per cent) that could be charged by lenders (Fitzpatrick 1939: 371).

THE 'MILLION ACRE GRANT'

The Australian Agricultural Company, formed in London in April 1824, was established by an Act of British Parliament and Royal Charter. Its directors and major shareholders included directors of the Bank of England, the East India Company and Members of Parliament. Its purpose was to raise fine-wooled sheep on a one million-acre grant in the 'northern waste lands' of New South Wales. This 'million acre grant' took up an area from Port Stephens to the Manning River. The company planned that most of their shepherds and labourers would be assigned convicts, supervised by 'free and experienced persons', many of them to be sent out from Europe on seven-year contracts. An extract from an early annual report shows the abundant interest the company held in the potential of the new colony:

The reports of Mr Bigge, the Commissioner of Inquiry bear ample testimony to the extraordinary degree in which the soil and climate of New South Wales are found to be congenial to the delicate constitution of Merino Sheep; and the correctness of his observation is established, beyond a doubt, by the result of experience on a scale of no inconsiderable extent for it is well known that numerous flocks, procured originally from Spain, have for some years past been thriving in the Colony, and that exports of Wool from thence to this country, has recently realised large returns to the proprietors, the superiority of the quality having commanded ready sales at high prices (AAC Annual Report, London, 1825: 29–33).

Such enthusiasm took a turn between 1841 and 1843, when New South Wales experienced a severe depression that had wide-ranging repercussions for the pastoral industry. As with any economic downturn, there were a number of causes, both internally and externally, that effected the change. In London the price of wool export markets depreciated, having an equally devastating effect upon the English textile industry (McMichael 1984: 167–75). Domestically, the combination of land speculation, capital influx, the end of assigned convict labour in 1840, high levels of squatter absenteeism, and the limits to chargeable interest rates placed new pressure on the economy (Burroughs 1867: 252–53; King 1950: 52). In New South Wales, many pastoralists resorted to boiling down their stock for tallow to make candles for sale in the colony and England (Morrissey, cited in Griffin 1967: 89–91).

In 1844, Governor Gipps attempted to regulate the station or run because squatters increasingly regarded these contested areas as their property, when in fact they were simply licensed occupiers of the land. Legislation during this time defined the station or run as an area under 20 square miles, carrying a capacity of 4000 sheep or 500 head of cattle. Licences were set at £10, although provision could be made for additional licenses. Gipps was also determined to provide security of tenure. Accordingly, provision was made for right of

purchase following a five-year residency. Squatters were to be given the opportunity to buy at least 320 acres of the run to build a homestead with an eight-year purchase security, that could be renewed in eight years with the optional purchase of another 320 acres (King 1957: 52).

The response from squatters, unconvinced of the merits of paying £40 per annum to secure tenure, was less than positive. By 1847 the Imperial *Waste Lands Occupation Act* and the Orders in Council replaced the earlier restrictions, calling for a £10 annual rent payment for 4000 sheep, and an eight- or fourteen-year tenure guarantee. This system remained in place until the *Crown Lands Alienation Act*, and the *Crown Lands Occupation Act*, of 1861 (King 1957: 54).

GOLD, WOOL AND SELF-GOVERNMENT

By 1846–49, there were 1866 squatters' runs in New South Wales (Roberts 1970: 362). Many of these runs were on unsettled Crown lands. For example, in 1847 there were 33 runs in the unsettled Crown lands of the Macleay. Kunderang, an outstation of Toorookoo (see Chapter 4) was one such example.

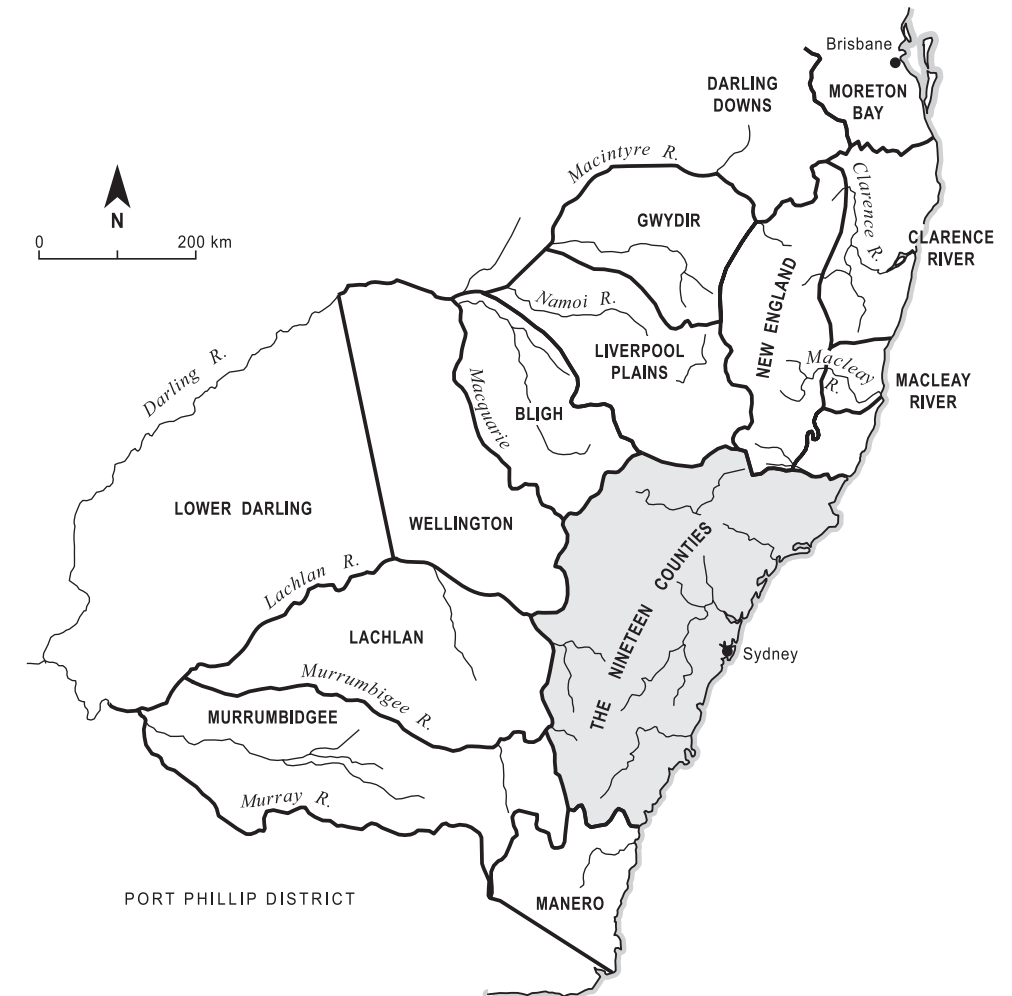


FIGURE 2.6 The nineteen counties and the newly established squatting districts, 1848–50.

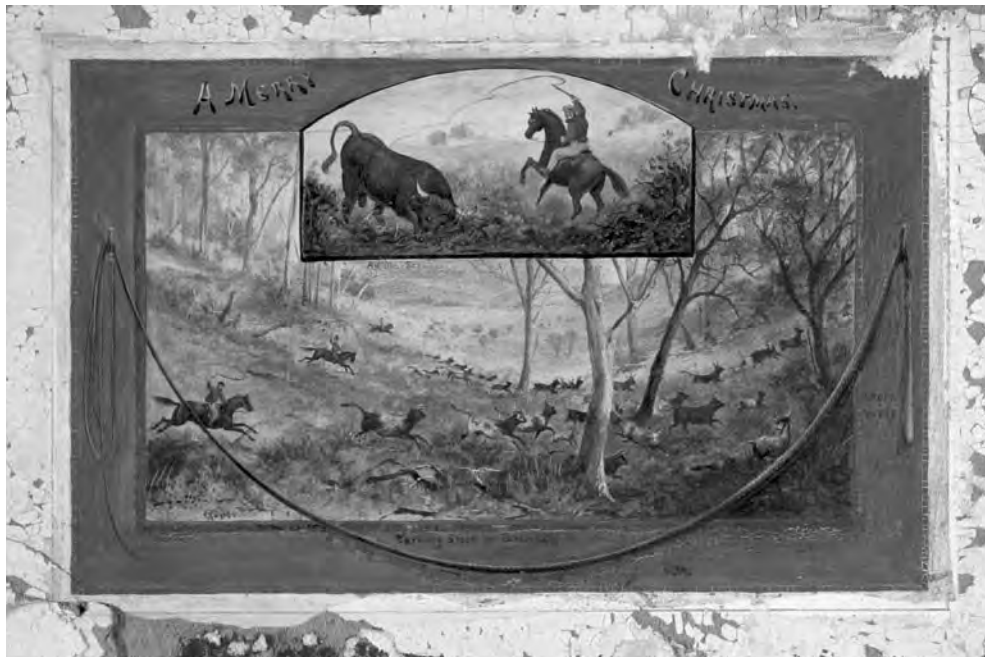


FIGURE 2.7 Edward Roper, 'Yarding stock for branding: an old scrubber', c 1855. (Oil painting on academy board in the form of a Christmas card; courtesy National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an2284204)

The gold rush in the 1850s further intensified efforts by middle-class colonial liberals to destabilise the conservative squatters' monopoly and to open access of Crown lands to all classes (McMichael 1984: 213). The combined export attractions of gold and wool ushered in the granting of self-government and the formalisation of five separate states by 1856. In response to this change, the New South Wales Government legislated – most notably with the 'Robertson Land Acts' of 1861 – to encourage small farming enterprise, better known as 'free selection'.

DUAL OCCUPATION

In the last years of the nineteenth century, Australia was producing the biggest wool clip in the world, and was the major provider of raw wool to the mills of northern England and Europe (Davidson 1981). From 1860 to 1890 the success of the colonies' wool industry accompanied intensified British land use. The rapid expansion of pastoral runs and their consolidation in the late 1800s placed serious pressures on Aboriginal landowners. A continuing issue for British reformers in the early to mid-1800s was the recognition of colonised people's property rights in land. The British Colonial Office, in response to lobbying from these humanitarian and reformist groups, was forced to recognise 'native title' and usage rights over pastoral lands in New South Wales in the 1840s (Goodall 1996).

In 1849, Earl Grey, the secretary of state for colonies – who was sympathetic to reformists' demands – instructed Governor Fitzroy to enforce an interpretation of the Lands Acts to guarantee Aboriginal people access to their traditional lands. This was to be in the form of 'dual occupancy' with pastoralists: a situation where Aborigines and squatters had 'mutual rights'. Grey argued that Crown leases to pastoralists allowed only limited rights, and that much of the rights of possession remained 'reserved' to the Crown (see Earl Grey's dispatches to Charles Fitzroy 1838–1848). Further, Grey called for the establishment of



FIGURE 2.8 The extent of European settlement of New South Wales in 1850.

small, agricultural reserves for Aboriginal people. In 1850, around 40 of these areas were approved as reserves across the new pastoral districts outside the nineteen counties (Goodall 1996).

The pastoral lobby, which had become powerful in New South Wales at that time, strongly opposed any constraint on the rights given to pastoral lessees. Its opposition defeated the implementation of Earl Grey's instruction, although it did not invalidate his interpretation of the pastoral lease. The status of pastoral leases and Aboriginal rights would be a key issue that would return in the *Mabo* and *Wik* decisions in the 1990s.



FIGURE 2.9 'Wool classers at work on Weilmoringle Station', c 1900. Note the Aboriginal man at left assisting. (Courtesy of Museum Victoria: MM 006298)

GOLD AND ABORIGINAL PASTORAL LABOUR

The transportation of convict labour to New South Wales ended in the 1840s, and the discovery of gold in the 1850s produced an employment gap in the burgeoning pastoral industry which was met by Aboriginal men and women. Commissioner Merewether, Crown Lands Commissioner for the New

England District, relayed to the governor in 1851: 'No outrages. The Discovery of Gold caused the services of the Natives to be highly appreciated as shepherds, grooms and even as house servants. In some cases wages of 20 pounds per annum were paid them' (CCL New England District to CC, GD, vol 74).

Many Aboriginal men and women were employed as stock workers, shearers, and shepherds at this time. While some of this work was for rations, other Aboriginal labourers received cash wages equal to white labourers. This was most notable in the shearing sheds. Aboriginal women were employed on sheep stations as domestic workers as well as outdoor labourers, and more rarely as shearers (McGrath 1987; Cole 1993; Goodall 1995; 1996; 1999). Aboriginal children often assisted their parents with domestic tasks and labouring work, such as feeding and tending to goats and pigs, and watering homestead gardens and orchards. This was particularly the case where Aboriginal people formed large resident encampments on, or close to, pastoral stations.



FIGURE 2.10 A group of shearers, including at least one Aboriginal man, Hay district. (Courtesy of Museum Victoria: MM007186)

During the early 1850s, Aboriginal labour was important not only in shepherding and shearing but also on cattle runs. In this industry, where cattle were mustered at regular intervals rather than tended all the time, there was less need for continuous labour, particularly after the introduction of perimeter fencing in the 1860s. The presence of an Aboriginal camp on or near a pastoral cattle property was important to this irregular seasonal pattern of the



FIGURE 2.11 W H Watts, 'Aboriginal workers, Willandra Station, Hillston area, New South Wales', c 1880. (Courtesy of State Library of New South Wales: BCP 05985)

industry. During the off-season Aboriginal people could return to family groups, and largely support themselves on bush tucker; during the busy periods they could be recruited rapidly (Brock 1995). Camps established during the 1850s on the big runs continued for as long as the properties remained large enough to require significant numbers of seasonal workers, and to have a low enough stock density to allow the modified continuation of a subsistence economy for Aboriginal workers and their families.

Pastoralists came to value the importance of Aboriginal knowledge of the land to locate feed, water and stock across vast distances. The work of shepherding and droving often gave Aboriginal people a relative sense of autonomy, the potential to continue ceremonial activities and hunting and gathering, and the opportunity to travel relatively widely through their country. This was in marked contrast with settlers, for whom it was often lonely, monotonous work in an alien landscape.

Aboriginal people were recruited from the extended family groups already resident on their land or seeking to return to it. They were embedded in a social network which itself was directly attached to the land. This offered a strong continuity in labour for pastoralists rather than the rapid turnover of white workers. Aboriginal people also trained their young men and women in stock-work, as well as in the knowledge of the country that made their work so valuable.

In later years, as more white workers became available, pastoralists reduced the cash component of Aboriginal workers' wages to virtually nothing, or entrapped it in the accounts book of the property store (Goodall 1995). By the turn of the twentieth century, Aboriginal workers from resident camps were still making up around 30 per cent of pastoral labour in north-west New South Wales, but they were increasingly relegated to casual or seasonal jobs (Castle and Hagan 1998) while the better-paid permanent jobs were for white employees (Goodall 1996: 62). In the twentieth century, as the gold rush slowed and other economic and environmental factors impacted on the industry, the levels of Aboriginal workers in the pastoral work fluctuated. However, in most areas Aboriginal women and men had created a distinctive place for themselves in the rural workforce.



FIGURE 2.12 Philip Rodgers, 'Corroboree on Wonnaminta Station, Wilcannia area, July 1888'. In addition to its role in transforming 'traditional' practices, pastoralism allowed some Aboriginal people to continue particular ceremonial and economic practices relatively unmodified after contact with Europeans. (Courtesy of State Library of New South Wales: BCP 06999)



FIGURE 2.13 Cora Gamack, 'Aboriginal girls (Lulu and Clara) employed to do the washing', Rollands Plains, NSW c 1925'. In addition to working as shearers, assisting in the woolsheds and working stock, Aboriginal women also often worked as domestic labourers. (Courtesy of State Library of New South Wales: BCP 04530)

RE-INVENTING THE FRONTIER

From a statistical perspective the colonial government's land laws appeared to consistently favour speculators and monopolists above individual settlers, demonstrating the political power wielded by the conservative squatters. King has argued that Governor Gipps' 1840s land reform legislation was intended to maintain the equilibrium between the government and squatters. However, the resulting regulations were undermined by the influx of gold-miners from Europe and America, whose influence changed the political environment in the colony, assisting in strengthening the squatters' power (King 1957: 60).

Critics of the government had long called for a system of encouraging cultivation, in the form of a tax on unimproved lands or a 'quit rent', so that the colony would profit from land distribution. Those people especially targeted were wealthy landowners with idle lands, and squatters. During the 1830s, the so-called 'single tax' theory was billed by its advocates as a virtual panacea for all of the colony's economic and social problems. However, the strength of the squatters in New South Wales prevented the introduction of such taxation, although similar moves were more successful in Victoria and South Australia from 1870 to 1890. Later, the *Land Tax Assessment Act* did raise significant revenue via a tax on large landholdings – in fact it became an important source for Federal Government public spending from 1910 to 1952 (Else-Mitchell 1974: 9–19).

THE ROBERTSON LAND ACTS OF 1861 AND FREE SELECTION

A new system of land occupation was introduced in 1861 with the Robertson Land Acts, whereby all Crown land, including that held on pastoral lease, was open to free selection. The Robertson Land legislation – named after John Robertson, premier of New South Wales – consisted of two Acts, the *Crown Lands Alienation Act* 1861 which was concerned with the sale of land, and the *Crown Lands Occupation Act* 1861 which dealt with the leasing of

Crown lands. Together they determined the land system of New South Wales until 1884 (Baker 1958). These Acts abolished the old land distinctions of the colony – settled districts (the nineteen counties plus specific established areas), and ‘intermediate’ and ‘unsettled’ districts – and they inaugurated a new system in response to the mass immigration of people of small means who had experienced difficulty establishing themselves under the old regulations. While land in the settled districts had been sold by auction, vast areas of rich grazing lands were under the control of the squatters.

In an attempt to redress this imbalance, the new legislation implemented Robertson’s land scheme for ‘free selection before survey’, whereby the whole leasehold area of the colony was open to selection and sale at any time. All of the Crown lands, including those on pastoral leases, were open to free selection before survey, and the tenure of pastoral leases was reduced. Subsequent attempts by selectors, whether bona fide settlers or speculators, to obtain land led them into open conflict with the squatters (Campbell 1968).

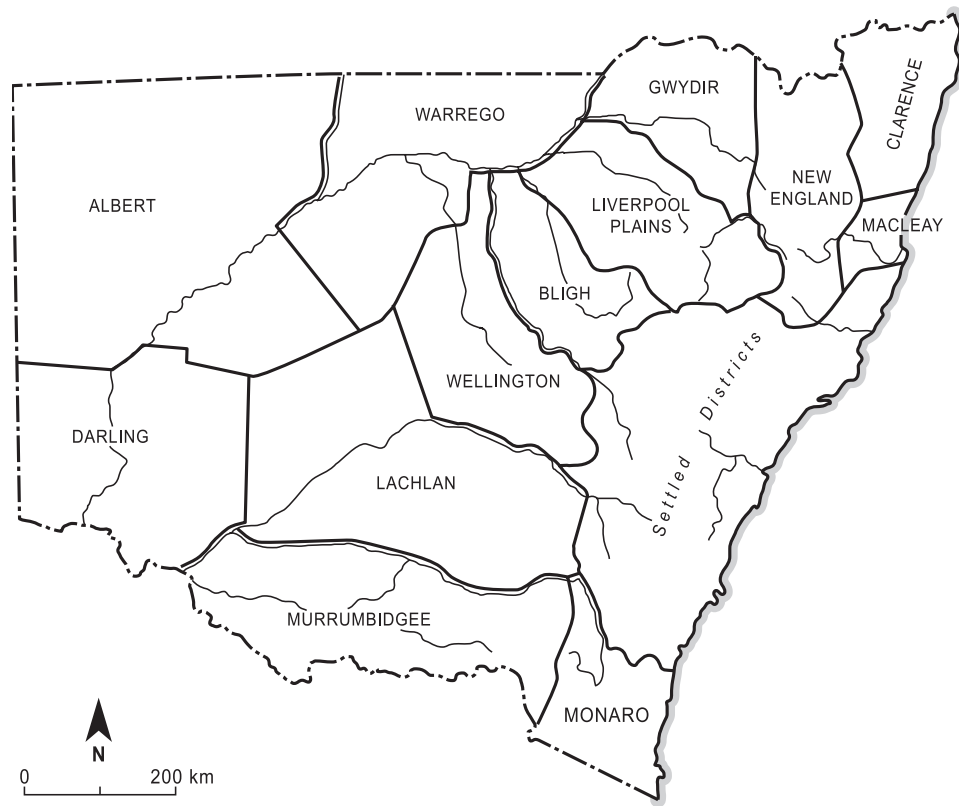


FIGURE 2.14 The pastoral districts of New South Wales established in response to the 1861 Robertson Land Acts.

Robertson sought to open the land to freehold agricultural settlers in an attempt to break the land domination of squatters. It was hoped that such legislation would introduce new smaller holdings and prevent speculation. At its core, the legislation was designed to buttress the pastoral industry, within the broader social and economic interests of the colony:

Honourable members must not expect a land law theoretically perfect. They ought to be prepared to accept such a moderate and practical solution of the land question as should, on the one hand, not injure materially the great pastoral interest, and, on the other, afford opportunities to the mass of the people to make homes for themselves, and settle down on the land, where they would at once advance their own interests and the best interests of the colony (Robertson, cited in Crowley 1980: 438).



FIGURE 2.15 ‘Shearing time at a selector’s shearing shed in the Birrie Creek, Brewarrina area’, 1880s. (Courtesy of State Library of New South Wales: BCP 03587)

CLOSER SETTLEMENT

This ‘closer settlement’ scheme, or the distribution of smaller and more affordable units of land, was influenced by similar legislation in America with the *Pre-emption Act* 1841 and the *Homestead Act* 1862. Smaller conditional land distribution was not as successful in Australia until the emergence of modern agricultural and transportation methods at the end of the nineteenth century. Unlike the American system, which profitted from a large settler population, strong rail networks and markets spread across the geographic breadth of the country, Australian farmers needed to be near, or have direct access to, one of the few big city markets (Buckley and Wheelwright 1992: 121). Allen (1956: 48–54) has argued that the intermediary period following the 1861 legislation was characterised by ineffectual planning and policing that was incapable of providing a scheme that matched the profits of the pastoral industry. The term ‘conditional purchase’, which referred to the conditions of purchase based on residency and improvements such as fencing, emerged at this time (King 1957: 80).

As an owner of freehold land that was subdivided to be sold to smaller farmers, Robertson’s legislation was destined to be advantageous to his own ventures (Buckley and Wheelwright 1992: 117). Under the new legislation, free selectors could purchase between 40 and 320 acres of resumed areas at £1 per acre with a £10 deposit. The balance was to be returned to the government within three years. Purchasers were required to reside on their land for at least one year, in an attempt to prevent land speculation.

Unfortunately the infant administrative system was incapable of preventing squatters and large landholders benefitting from a system designed for free selectors. Runholders used various methods to safeguard their lands. ‘Peacocking’ or ‘picking the eyes out of the land’ involved buying up watered land, thus making outlying lands useless to free selectors.

'Dummying' was the common term for a squatter buying up adjacent lands with the help of hired 'dummies' or shadow buyers such as friends or family members who represented the squatter's interests. The adjacent land was bought at the considerably cheaper free-selector prices and added to the owner's estate (Allen 1956: 58–60). Attempts to ban dummying culminated in the failed *Crown Lands Amendment Act 1875* (King 1957: 90).

REACTIONS TO THE NEW LEGISLATION

The immediate reaction of the market to the new legislation was positive. In 1862, 2449 selections were made, declining gradually in subsequent years with 1730 selections in 1863, 1166 in 1864, and 1050 in 1865. The establishment of rail infrastructure greatly improved market accessibility, and this assisted in selections increasing to an average of 4761 per year during the period 1873 to 1884 (Black 1894: 20–21). However, the white landed population remained divided into two antagonistic teams: runholders or squatters, and free selectors (Lines 1991: 94–95; Else-Mitchell 1974: 19–26; Lamb 1967). What transpired was well described by Reginald Black (1894: 12–13) for the Australian Pastoralists' Association: 'Is it to be wondered at that war to the knife took place between these two sets of men? The runholder looked upon the selector as a base intruder, and the selector regarded the runholder as his mortal enemy.'

The press and land reformers commented continually on the extent of dummying and peacocking by pastoralists and squatters to secure portions of lands within 'resumed areas' that were intended for small landholders. The actions of land jobbers were described by land reformers as central to the problems of land distribution that they believed successive legislation had failed to adequately address. One official petition from 'Certain Citizens of Sydney' was read in Parliament in 1878 and outlined the increasing frustration of small free-selector landholders:

The humble petition of the Citizens of Sydney – Respectfully Showeth: That your Petitioners, alive to the calamitous results of the Lands Act of 1861, and the Land Amending Act of 1875, which have led to the accumulation of enormously large estates into the possession of a few individuals, to the harassing and extinction of bona fide free selectors, and to the rise and increase of dummies and blackmailers; your Petitioners view with alarm the present Lands Amendment Bill, which, if allowed to become law, would not only aggravate the evil a hundredfold, but rob the country of many millions of pounds sterling.

Without government support for small farmers, by way of capital and legislative restrictions on land profiteering, the 1861 legislation was limited in effect.

THE CROWN LANDS ACT 1884

The *Crown Lands Act 1884* gave greater fixity to pastoral lessees (Potter 1889). In the nearest districts, 640 acres were allowed, but in the less settled central district the maximum was increased four-fold. To provide the land, each squatter's run was to be divided into two portions: one half retained by the lessee, and other area 'resumed' and opened for selection by a class of small farmers. The areas retained by the squatters were held under pastoral lease, but they were entitled to occupy the resumed areas for grazing purposes under licence until they were selected. The parts of the runs retained under pastoral lease could be held for 15 years in the Western division, ten years in the Central division, and five years in the Eastern division. (These three divisions – Eastern, Western and Central – had been created when the *Crown Lands Act 1884* decentralised the Land Department's administration. A local land board was established for each district, with a right of appeal from its decision to the Land Appeals Court.)

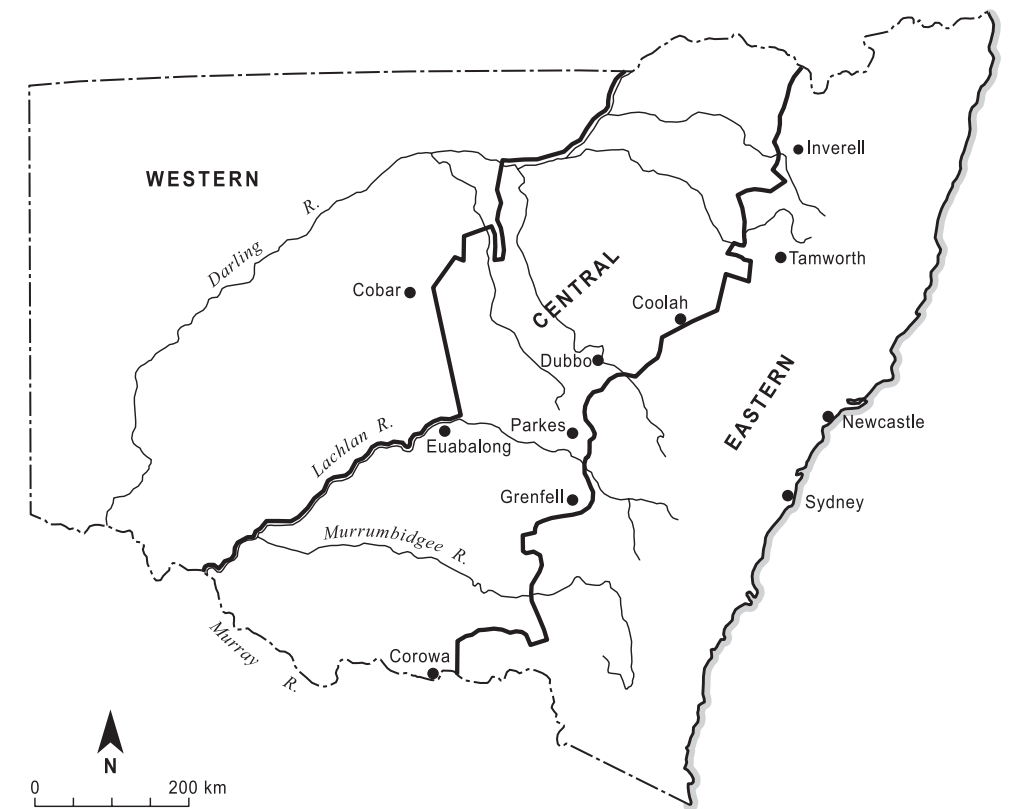


FIGURE 2.16 The territorial divisions established under the *Crown Lands Act 1884*.

The *Crown Lands Act* was important for other reasons. Land was no longer held under the old pastoral leases, and pastoral holdings were now divided into two parts: a leasehold portion and a resumed portion. Land held under freehold title was not included, and pastoralists were more secure on the leasehold portion of their runs, which usually included the main improvements such as the station homestead. Pastoralists could use the resumed areas if they paid an annual licence fee (see discussion of the effects of this division at Kunderang station in Chapter 4) (Potter 1889).

AMENDMENTS TO THE LAND ACTS

Amendments to the Land Acts in 1884 and 1889 did little to improve the situation, despite the new determination for pastoralists to abandon half of their runs to the public to encourage free selection. Speculation about land reforms was generated whenever leases came up for renewal. This situation continually risked livelihoods in inland country towns such as Bourke, Wilcannia, Moree, Dubbo, Wagga Wagga and Hay, and others that were dependent upon sources of employment such as ring-barking, rabbit-fencing and dam-sinking.

In the Eastern division, squatters could retain leasehold areas under the conditions of a five-year lease. The resumed area was offered under conditional purchase to free selection. Although the new lessees could occupy the area, the run or pastoral holding retained its original name (King 1957: 99–101; Roberts 1968: 309–11). This was a massive administrative feat on the part of the government, as it investigated, documented and then divided the enormous array of pastoral runs.

FREE SELECTION

Various problems continued to plague free selection and, where possible, they were answered with legislative changes. The *Crown Lands Act* 1895 was a response to the frequent litigation due to dummyming and the disappointing levels of free selection. To encourage selection, this Act provided new classifications of land tenure: homestead selection, settlement lease and improvement lease (King 1957: 133–37). Unfortunately, drought in the first few years of the twentieth century hampered the 1884 and 1889 legislative plans to set up a newly amended class of small-scale free selectors. To assist landholders in the west, a Western Lands Board was established in 1901 (Roberts 1968: 311).

Meanwhile, those almost forgotten agricultural goals of the first colonial governors under-went an unexpected boom during the 1890s, due to the combined effects of the depression, railway infrastructure, decline in wool profits and international demand for wheat (King 1957: 116). By the turn of the century, government investment and William Farrer's wheat experiments turned wheat into a cash crop (Roberts 1968: 312). Unfortunately for pastoralists, high debts and falling produce prices had savaged the wool industry. Yet the inflated demand for land, combined with the competitive trade offered by Sydney's markets meant that by 1900, the trend price for land in New South Wales was £14 per acre. This was in marked contrast to Victoria, South Australia and Queensland, where prices were £1 4s, 3 shillings and 1 shilling per acre respectively (Taylor 1992: 10). Despite the privations of economic, social and environmental change, access to land remained fundamental to individual and collective wealth.

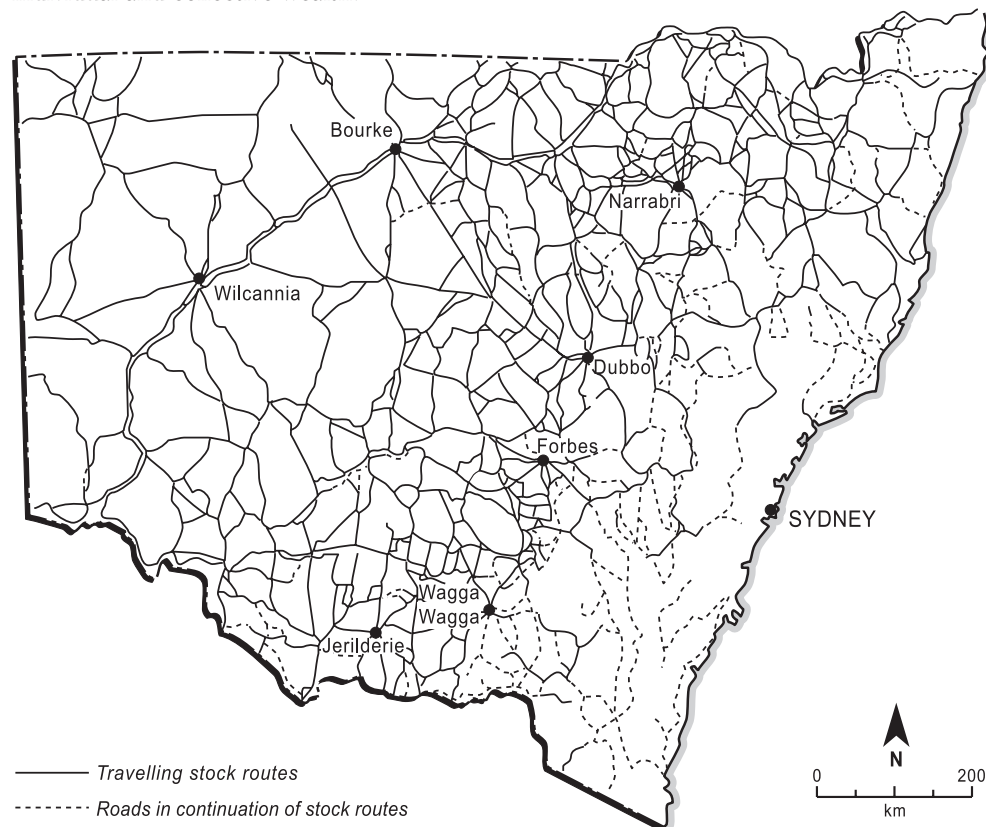


FIGURE 2.17 The extensive system of travelling stock-routes in New South Wales in 1904, shortly after the passing of the *Pastures Protection Act*.



FIGURE 2.18 Harold Cazneaux, 'Australian stock route', c. 1935. (Courtesy National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an2384470)

TRAVELLING STOCK-ROUTES

The extensive nature of late nineteenth-century pastoralism in Australia created a need to move stock long distances overland to widely dispersed market centres. Informal livestock trails and travelling stock-routes originally developed in New South Wales alongside the early road transport network, but by the 1860s regulations began to be put into effect to control some of the established and most-used stock-routes.

The *Occupation Act* of 1861 stipulated that stock were not to be permitted to stray more than half a mile onto unfenced land which bordered a recognised line of stock travel (McKnight 1977: 42). It also stipulated that stock needed to be driven at least four miles every day.

In 1864, a permit system was established to control the route to be travelled by sheep crossing into New South Wales (McKnight 1977: 42). Legislation from this time also began to gazette camping reserves and specific public watering points along stock-routes. The establishment of the exact routes throughout the nineteenth century relied primarily on the need to supply sheep with water every six miles, and cattle with water every ten miles (McKnight 1977: 26).

In 1902, with the passing of the *Pastures Protection Act*, 66 Pastures Protection Boards were established, charged with the responsibility of dealing with the control of livestock diseases and travelling stock. By this time, the network of stock-routes across New South Wales had become extensive (see Figure 2.17). The Pasture Protection Boards took on responsibility for building watering facilities and the gazetting of fenced camping reserves for public use along stock-routes. Today there are still almost 2000 constructed watering facilities, including bores, dams and windmills, along with other facilities such as yards and dips, associated with stock-routes in New South Wales (McKnight 1977: 26).

During the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such fenced camping reserves and travelling stock-routes provided a generally unrestricted form of land tenure which provided opportunities for Aboriginal people to camp and travel unhindered, even while closer settlement was providing a hindrance to such opportunities elsewhere. (This issue will be discussed in detail in Part III; see also Byrne and Nugent in press.)

DEPRESSION, DROUGHT AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

International markets, as much as internal conditions of drought or environmental degradation, have always affected the New South Wales pastoral industry. The first collapse of the international wool markets in the 1840s hit the industry hard, but it recovered for a boom peaking in the 1870s when wool prices were at their highest. By 1881 there were 8 million sheep in western New South Wales, nearly doubling in the next decade to 15 million (Burke 2001). However, by the 1890s the industry was reeling from the fall in international wool prices and an eight-year drought that commenced in 1895. Other problems that were particularly experienced in the Western division were rabbit plagues and overstocking.

In these years, many runs were abandoned as banks foreclosed and selectors were forced off the land (Cain 1961). Their runs were often taken up by larger company holdings. The *Western Lands Act* 1901 established a policy of retaining land in the most fragile areas, like the Western division, as Crown land. The Act instituted a Western Lands Board that classified land in the far west of the state. The aim was to regulate these arid regions through regular inspections and specific lease conditions. During boom periods for wool, such as after the Second World War, closer settlement occurred again in this region.



FIGURE 2.19 W Falk, 'Record load, 150 bales, weight 17 tons 12 cwt 1 qr 15 lbs, T Baywater, Carrier', c 1910. (Postcard in photographs of the Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd, Dubbo; courtesy National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an23378069)

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT AND A CHANGING SOCIAL ECONOMY

The subdivision of properties that began before the First World War accelerated with the introduction of the Soldier Settlement Scheme. Following both world wars, large parcels of Australian farming lands were purchased, divided up into small blocks and given to



FIGURE 2.20 'A soldier settler on horseback in front of his home, wearing some of his army uniform, Kooloonong, Victoria, c 1925'. (Courtesy of Museum Victoria: MM 002303)

returned soldiers by the Federal Government (Lake 1987; Smallwood 1992).

Prior to the end of the First World War, the question of what to do with returned soldiers was an important political and public issue. The Soldier Settlement Scheme was devised to transplant returned soldiers from the

cities, where they might prove a liability, to rural areas where it was hoped they would become self-sufficient. State governments assisted the scheme with loans of up to £500 for buildings, clearing, fencing and stock, with interest rates at 3.5 per cent for the first year, increasing every subsequent year by 0.5 per cent. Land was made available through subdivided Crown lands, unsettled or leasehold holdings, farming allotments carved from state government purchased estates, and individual farms bought by the State Land Settlement Authority.

When a similar scheme was proposed to reward Second World War soldiers, a review of the previous scheme was held. It discovered a number of flaws, including the redundancy of the farming skills test due to the overwhelming numbers of returned soldiers, popular opinion and the press, post-war price increases for stock and equipment, and the inexperience of returned soldiers. Problems had also been caused by the declining prices of agricultural commodities from the period 1924 to 1930, and the financial stress on state governments had not been adequately anticipated by either each state authority or the Federal Government, which had accepted the transfer of responsibility (Rural Construction Commission 1943: 3–6).

Schemes for closer settlement after the First World War generally 'failed miserably' (McRae 1987: 7). Blocks were generally too small, liabilities too great, and a desire to recognise a debt of gratitude for war service resulted in many inexperienced men being allocated blocks. In the New England area, for example, average holdings were designed to carry only 1000 cattle, but in order to make repayments and 'improve' the land, settlers needed a minimum of 1400 head of stock (New England Settlers' Association 1962). However, road access to the north-coast regions of New South Wales was one of the benefits of the state government-assisted Soldier Settlement Scheme (Roberts 1968: 410).

It was Justice Pike's conviction in his report to the Federal Government that the state domination of the land settlement scheme had reduced its effectiveness. This was in combination with other factors such as lack of capital, not maintaining amply sized homestead lease areas, lack of training of soldiers for work on the land, and the drop in value of produce, especially in irrigation areas (Pike 1929: 6, 22–23).

The Second World War Soldier Settlement Scheme stated that settlement should be undertaken only where economic prospects were reasonably sound, and holdings were of sufficient size to enable settlers to operate efficiently and earn a reasonable income. The Soldier Settlement Commission sought large holdings for subdivision and properties 'occupied' by absentee owners. One of the immediate consequences was the break-up of many of what Joanne Jackson describes as 'the large fine-wool clips' of the Western district (McRae 1987: 7). Poor land and a lack of capital again ensured many failures (Lake 1987).



FIGURE 2.21 'An Aboriginal man with dingo skin, Darling area, c 1930'. Note that the man wears a World War I Army jacket. By the 1930s many Aboriginal people had begun to suffer the break-up of the large pastoral properties of the nineteenth century. Some Aboriginal people found itinerant work trapping dingos and rabbits, whose pelts could be sold. (Courtesy of Museum Victoria: MM 004557)

SHIFTING ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS

The Soldier Settlement Scheme, along with broader economic conditions, changed the social landscape of pastoralism for both Aboriginal people and settlers during the 1930s. Intensive grazing, interference with water supplies, the shooting of native game and the post-war subdivision of properties, coupled with the 1930s economic depression, the intrusion of the Aborigines Protection (and later Welfare) Board and the dispersal of Aboriginal communities by these government agencies altered the social landscape. Family-sized blocks needed few if

any permanent workers and had neither the means, nor need, to support an Aboriginal camp – as the larger pastoral properties had done in earlier periods (Brock 1995).

This was a time of increasing government control over Aboriginal people in rural areas (Morris 1989). By the 1930s, in most parts of New South Wales nearly all Aboriginal pastoral workers were either fringe dwellers or 'clients' of the Aborigines Protection Board (Beckett 1958; 1964; 1978; Long 1970). The labour roles of Aboriginal women had largely been superseded, and pastoral work for men tended to be limited to contract shearing and stockwork (Beckett 1964).

Long (1970) notes that by 1930 there was a major increase in the populations of supervised reserves, when large numbers of Aboriginal people found themselves out of work after it was made obligatory to pay Aboriginal workers the same wages as white workers (see also Gahan 1994). The Aborigines Protection Board (1909–1939) and later Aborigines' Welfare Board (1940–1969) forcibly removed Aboriginal people from 'fringe camps' to reserves and managed stations throughout this time.

Heather Goodall (1995: 84ff) describes the policies of the Aborigines Protection Board after 1934 in terms of systematic segregation, as it sought to concentrate Aboriginal people throughout New South Wales into a limited number of supervised reserves. By 1935, many Aboriginal people had been forced off smaller unsupervised reserves, many of them self-established farms, and the population of the small number of supervised reserves doubled. The 1936 amendments to the *Aborigines' Protection Act* dictated that Aboriginal people would be confined on reserves until they had been educated so that they could be assimilated into white society. This was the first of three major contributing factors during the middle part of the twentieth century which challenged and severely undermined the relative stability of relationships between Aboriginal people and pastoralists that had been established during the period 1855–1930.

TECHNOLOGY AND CHANGE

The introduction of mechanisation in the pastoral economy, notably the increasing availability and use of utilities and trucks, was another important factor which diminished



FIGURE 2.22 Frank Hurley, 'Shearing time at Berida, Gilgandra, New South Wales', c 1910–1962. The move from hand shears to mechanical shears was one of a series of technological shifts which led to an overall decline in the labour requirements of pastoral properties throughout the twentieth century in Australia. (Courtesy National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an235039990)

the role of both Aboriginal and settler drovers and musterers in outback New South Wales. The period from the 1910s to 1960s brought a new series of economic factors, the end of large-scale properties, and a lessening need for Aboriginal labour. The subdivision of large pastoral properties and the decline in the proportion of wage labourers to self-employed small holders accelerated this process. In the post-Second World War period, advances in technology – in the form of improved machinery, selective plant and animal breeding, fertilisers and pesticides – promised to revolutionise the pastoral industry (Wahlquis 1998).

However, by the late 1950s and 1960s, whole categories of jobs were lost as technology and industry structure shifted. Mechanised harvesters, for example, eliminated the need for many workers in the inland wheat and coastal corn industries, while wheat silos eliminated employment for bag sewers. In the pastoral industry, trucks and motorbikes reduced the need for horsemen and women in both the sheep and cattle industries, while road trains virtually eliminated the droving jobs. In the 1960s, only one crop in outback New South Wales generated new jobs: cotton.

WATTIE CREEK AND EQUAL WAGES

Although it occurred some 2000 kilometres to the north, the Gurindji strike at Wave Hill pastoral station in the Northern Territory was to have enormous repercussions for Aboriginal pastoral labourers across Australia. Echoing developments in New South Wales of three to four decades earlier, in late 1965 Aboriginal pastoral workers in the Northern Territory were granted wages equal to their fellow non-indigenous pastoral workers under the



FIGURE 2.23 'Cattle muster in the high country', 1936–37. While high-country mustering outlasted the overland sheep mustering on horseback, motorised transport such as four-wheel drive vehicles and motorbikes are now widely used in such areas. (Marylebone Cricket Club collection; courtesy National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an23488110)

federal industrial award. However, on being informed that they would have to wait three years for this to take effect (giving the pastoral companies time to adjust to these new costs) by September 1966 the whole Aboriginal staff of Wave Hill

station decided to strike. Removing themselves to a camp at Wattie Creek, they announced to the pastoral company Vestey's that they wanted their land returned (Bunbury 2002).

Aboriginal people in New South Wales saw these demands as akin to their own calls to have their aspirations in land realised, and with new-found support from the 'new Left' in the wake of the 1967 referendum, Aboriginal farmers and pastoralists in New South Wales strengthened their demands for land justice (Goodall 1996). Their situation was not as bad as in northern Australia, where, due to a reluctance or inability to pay equal wages, thousands of Aboriginal pastoral workers and their families were forcibly removed from pastoral stations where many of them had lived since birth. Nevertheless, the Gurindji case contributed to a period during the 1960s in which Aboriginal people found their place in the New South Wales pastoral workforce contested.

GLOBALISATION

During the 1980s, the globalisation of commodity production, combined with the removal of national tariff and subsidy protection from some rural industries, saw the beginning of a decade of 'radical rural adjustment' in Australia (Burke 2001). As Sheridan Burke notes 'for nearly two decades Australia had ridden on the sheep's back'. With the collapse of the Soviet markets, followed by a recession affecting the markets of western Europe, Japan and China, Australian wool prices were halved in 1990. Wool prices fell to their lowest recorded value in 1991 and the national reserve price scheme for wool failed – leaving a wool stockpile and a long-term debt for wool producers. The eastern states also experienced an extended drought throughout the 1990s.

SALINATION AND WOODY WEED

The widespread clearing of native vegetation for grazing, and the introduction of exotic species – particularly sheep, but also feral European animals such as rabbits, goats, pigs and carp – have had a major impact on the land and water systems of New South Wales (Wright 1993). Extensive clearing and irrigation systems have raised the water table and led to an extensive salination problem. Coinciding with increased saline levels, top soils have been washed or blown away (Burke 2001). With Aboriginal firestick farming no longer maintaining grassy rangelands through regular clearing of shrubs, the remaining grasslands have become seriously overgrazed. As a result woody weed has become established in many pastoral and farming areas, growing into dense thickets and out-competing native grasses. Woody weeds are now prolific over 70 per cent of western New South Wales, growing over pastures and interfering with stock-routes (Booth 1994).



FIGURE 2.24 Frank Hurley, 'Miss McCutcheon at the wool sorting table at Berida Station, Gilgandra, New South Wales', c 1910–1962. The twentieth century has seen a series of wool market fluctuations, which have taken their toll on the economic viability of sheep pastoralism. (Courtesy National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an23398085)

The impact of grazing and other pastoral land uses on the environment has in some places been extreme. This has included damage to soils and ecosystems by hard-hoofed animals, changes in groundwater supplies as a result of installing artificial watering points, and the provision of micro-environments that encourage the growth of other weeds such as blackberries and burr. Cleared land in marginal environments, such as alpine areas, often takes many years to regenerate.

While on the one hand these could be considered to be ‘scars on the landscape’, the effects of pastoral land management on the natural environment form an important part of the heritage of the pastoral industry. They not only demonstrate the pattern and spread of pastoral activities, but also provide interpretive opportunities to educate the general public in conservation issues.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, environmental and agricultural scientists have become increasingly concerned about land degradation in rural Australia (Cameron and Elix 1991). This in turn has had a major impact on the pastoral industry in the twenty-first century. Some measure of this impact can be seen in a new project by the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales called ‘Abandoned for the Good of the Land’. The project records the stories and decisions to abandon pastoral land use due to the non-viability of the wool industry and permanent environmental damage due to overstocking and land clearing. The inability of many small soldier settlement blocks to support enough animals to produce a profit is reflected in the number of such properties that have been acquired by the former NPWS (Harrison 2002c).

Indeed, the current widespread acquisition of former pastoral properties as National Parks and reserved areas needs to be placed within the historical context of this broad range of rural changes in the mid to late twentieth century. Overgrazing in particular has led to environmental degradation and loss of species diversity throughout western New South Wales (Lunney 2001). Soil erosion, salinity and the spread of woody weeds have also had their natural, long-term patterns of development accelerated by the misapplication of poor pastoral land-use practices. The acquisition of former pastoral properties as conservation areas both takes advantage of these historical changes in rural land use, and seeks to compensate for the environmental changes caused by them.

WIK AND SHARED HISTORIES OF PASTORALISM

During the 1990s, the High Court’s decision in the *Wik* case once more brought the question of pastoral leases under the spotlight. Today, over 40 per cent of the Australian landmass is still under pastoral lease (Brennan 1998: 32). Significantly, the recent debates over the status of pastoral leases echo those from the earliest days of pastoral expansion in New South Wales. Indeed, three of the judges in the *Wik* case referred to early nineteenth-century pastoral leases and the historical precedent created when Earl Grey argued that pastoral leases did not extinguish Aboriginal rights to hunt and practice ceremony.

In the debates surrounding the *Wik* decision, it became clear that the pastoral lease was a unique Australian statutory creation. Pastoral leases in Australia, the *Wik* judges agreed, are a form of title developed in the nineteenth century to meet the needs of those squatters who wanted to operate vast sheep and cattle runs outside the more closely settled areas opened for selection (see Reynolds 1987). All the judges in the *Wik* decision agreed that the rights and obligations of the pastoralists depended on the terms of the leases and the law under which they were granted. The majority thought the mere granting of a pastoral lease did not necessarily extinguish any remaining native title rights. Recent deliberation over the extinguishment of native title on Western Land leases in New South Wales demonstrates that this is an ongoing issue.

The rights of native titleholders were retained with the *Wik* judgment, providing, that is, there is no conflict with the rights of pastoralists. If there is, then the matter is to be resolved in favour of the pastoralists. This significant decision, and the national debate that surrounded it, was indicative of the long and unresolved nature of Australia’s shared history of pastoralism. *Wik* reminds us of the long and sometimes close associations between Aboriginal communities and Australia’s pastoral heritage.

Another recent development in the mutual histories of the pastoral industry in Australia involves the ‘outstation’ movement – a development where increasingly Aboriginal people themselves are moving onto former pastoral lands and managing their own pastoral stations as a rich and dynamic extension of their cultural heritage. Central to the movement has been the establishment in 1995 of the federally funded Indigenous Land Corporation, which assists Aboriginal people in obtaining and managing land through funding opportunities provided by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Fund in both the settled south-eastern states as well as in northern and central Australia. These developments further highlight the importance of pastoral heritage to the identity of Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islanders in contemporary Australia.

A BRIEF HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE PASTORAL INDUSTRY

At this point it is pertinent to pause and consider the changes made over the last 50 years in the way the history of the pastoral industry has been written. These modifications reflect changes in history, the humanities and social sciences in general. The historiography of pastoral history is important in understanding the development of the ‘woolsheds and homesteads’ model of pastoral heritage management, which developed out of the early histories of the pastoral industry in Australia. However, as I argue in this book, this model has failed to incorporate developments in pastoral history which emphasise the mutual histories of Aboriginal and settler pastoralists, and the social histories of pastoral workers.

Early work on the pastoral industry by historians such as Noel Butlin (1955) focused on the economic history of the industry. Although Butlin’s primary interest was the post-gold rush Australian economy, he was influential in the economic school of pastoral history by founding the Noel Butlin Archives of Business and Labour at the Australian National University. Butlin’s work was based around the detailed and masterful compilation and analysis of statistical data, and his work on the pastoral industry influenced the course of pastoral historiography in Australia over the next two decades (Bailey 1966; Barnard 1958; Makin 1970; Rothery 1970). Historians such as Hardy (1968) and Stevens (1974) shifted the focus slightly during the 1960s and 1970s to document the systematic exploitation of Aboriginal labour by the pastoral industry in Australia.

Later revisionist histories by authors such as McGrath (1980; 1987; see also Cowlishaw 1988; May 1994) challenged this focus on wages and labour, arguing instead that pastoral stations represented a ‘frontier zone’ for cross-cultural negotiations and encounters. McGrath’s work has been critically important in understanding the mutual, cross-cultural histories of the pastoral industry. She notes:

We don't need to throw out our pastoral legends for there is much to cherish in them, but we need to get the stories straight and see there is more than one plot. What must be brought to light are the previously hidden stories of hard work, affection, compromise, generosity of spirit of sharing and co-operation between Aboriginal and white pastoralists who came together on one land. Aborigines had a huge role in shaping our cattle industry, they built the stations, they nurtured cattle and cultural sites, they nurtured white kids, they made everything grow (McGrath 1997).

Other revisionist histories, particularly those drawing on oral history undertaken with pastoral workers themselves, have also been active in documenting the role of Aboriginal women in the pastoral industry, both in stock work and domestic labour (Laurie and McGrath 1985; Hunt 1986). Critics of McGrath (eg Hess 1994; Brock 1995) have noted differences in the experiences of Aboriginal people working on pastoral stations attended by owner/managers and those run by larger corporate holdings with absentee owners. The emergence of a historical literature composed by Aboriginal people themselves has contributed to an understanding of the pastoral industry as governed by complex social and economic race relations (Wharton 1992; Boyoi and Walker 1991; Shaw 1986).

In his seminal study of the life of George Dutton, an Aboriginal drover from western New South Wales during the early to mid-twentieth century, Jeremy Beckett recounts the somewhat startling comment that: 'I have heard drovers in bars rehearsing each step of a route, remembering what had happened here and there along the way, as though they were Aborigines "singing the country"' (1978: 2).

Beckett argues that the condition of Aboriginal labour on pastoral properties prior to 1920 was one of 'internal colonialism' – a regime that preserved traditional institutions in order to maintain a supply of cheap, readily available labour (but see Castle and Hagan 1998). Cultural difference, he argues, obscured and legitimised exploitation, yet at the same time it enabled Aboriginal people a degree of independence. However, Dutton's narrative reflects as much on the things that settler pastoralists learnt from Aboriginal people in their relationship with country as on the ways in which Aboriginal people remained autonomous on the pastoral frontier (see also Murray in press).

At the heart of the shared history of the pastoral industry lies 'country' or the landscape itself, and people's interactions with(in) it. Pastoral landscapes form the backdrop to the drama of Aboriginal and settler Australians coming to know both each other and the spaces where they found themselves working. I later argue that this 'shared history' approach is critical to land managers in understanding the history of the former pastoral lands they manage.

Cowlishaw (1999) has recently addressed these issues in a book based on field research at the remote cattle station of Bulman at Rembarrnga in Arnhem Land. Cowlishaw sees pastoralism and the pastoral domain as a complex system of negotiation of race and power – a site where urban dwellers developed ideas about the country, where anthropologists wrote policies for Aboriginal people, and where pastoralists and Aboriginal people created and sustained transformed social identities. Her book, *Rednecks, Eggheads and Blackfellas*, describes the pastoral domain as a 'palimpsest', as opposed to the more popular notion in post-colonial studies of 'hybridisation'. (A palimpsest is the place where a text has been overwritten or erased to make way for another text.)

In the end, Cowlishaw argues for the legitimacy of both metaphors for describing the cultural process of settler-colonialism on Bulman pastoral station:

I do not deny that life at Bulman could be described as thoroughly hybrid, replete with in-between and undecidable categories. There is a sense of hybridity in Nelly's proclamation, 'I can go blackfella way or whitefella way', because both of these 'ways' are part of her own identity. Social identities at Bulman are composed from being stockmen and school kids as well as from being dua or yirritja; all have common experience of those things claimed by whites as theirs ... [But] the metaphor of hybridity ... too easily bypasses the varied experiences of those who remain hidden on the margins ... it is difference itself which is reified in public and popular discourse as given, immutable, racial. (Cowlishaw 1999: 32).

Notions of hybrid spirituality, palimpsest meanings and landscapes, and the pastoral domain as an arena for active negotiation of identity, race, gender and desire provide ways

of understanding pastoralism as a social, landscape-level process. (This is a point to which I return in Chapter 10.) The concept of race, both as a sociological concept and lived cultural reality, is central to understanding the mutual histories of the pastoral industry in Australia.

Other writers have highlighted different social themes in the history of the pastoral industry in Australia. For example, Rowse (1987; see also Head and Fullagar 1997) draws attention to the pronounced 'seasonality' of Aboriginal pastoral labour in northern Australia, and the impact of seasonal work on the ability of Aboriginal people to maintain ritual and social obligations during the wet season when they were temporarily laid off work. He also critically examines the institution of rationing in the pastoral industry, suggesting that 'rationing was a pervasive institution of central Australian colonialism' (Rowse 1998). The notion that Aboriginal people understood rationing as reciprocity is also discussed at length by Rowse, who suggests that rationing needs to be understood as much more than a simple exchange of labour for goods. Rationing provided a way for both pastoralists and the wider non-indigenous community to conceptualise Aboriginal people, as well as a social technique or tool of governance. While many authors have pointed out the benefits of pastoral work patterns for Aboriginal people, the issue of coercion and racial inequality in pastoral labour should not be underplayed.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has sketched the history of the pastoral industry with a focus on land laws and their impacts on Aboriginal people's social relations with non-Aboriginal pastoralists in New South Wales. Of particular importance to the shared history of the pastoral industry was a general shortage of labour in the 1850s caused by the flood of white labourers to the goldfields, which created a place on pastoral properties for Aboriginal labourers who had found themselves dislocated by earlier pastoral expansion.

Despite a period of relative stability for Aboriginal people, successive waves of legislative reform starting in 1861 with the Robertson Land Acts produced conditions that increasingly threatened Aboriginal people's place in this rural workforce. This, coupled with changing economic conditions and technology in the period 1910 to 1960, had a devastating effect on Aboriginal people's position in the pastoral labour force.

The post-war soldier settlement schemes made it particularly difficult for Aboriginal people to find work, because of the successive redistribution of land from large landholders to subsistence farmers who had little need for or means to support a resident Aboriginal population. Changes in the global market economy and environmental degradation have also taken a toll on the viability of many pastoral properties in New South Wales in the twentieth century. This has led to the widespread acquisition of former pastoral properties in New South Wales as national parks and conservation areas.

Finally, the varied phases of writing histories of the pastoral industry provide different themes for exploring the wider implications of that history. One important implication of many of these studies is the way the pastoral industry can be read as an arena for social interaction. Shifting emphasis away from the technological and economic aspects of pastoral history, these studies focus on the roles of people as active agents in the pastoral industry, and the interactions between people and their environment. This establishes the basis for writing a history of the pastoral industry in New South Wales that demonstrates how pastoral history is written onto the landscape, and the manner in which people are involved in a mutual process of constituting, and being constituted by, the landscape. This forms an essential background to the case-studies developed in Parts II and III.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

This chapter outlines my approach to the ‘Shared Histories of the Pastoral Industry in New South Wales’ project, and discusses the methods used in undertaking it. It is necessary to discuss the project methods separately, as the case-studies drew on a diverse range of disciplines and techniques, particularly in collecting field data. The methods employed in each strongly structured the nature of the data collected and the final form of the book.

The Shared Histories of the Pastoral Industry in New South Wales project was intended to be a major two-year cultural heritage research program. It was to have at least two field case-studies, and produce a number of specific results that would help historic heritage conservation practice in New South Wales and Australia.

In developing the project I followed my previous work on the archaeology and oral histories of Aboriginal people working in the pastoral industry in the south-east Kimberley (eg Harrison 2000a; 2002a; 2002b; 2002d; in press). This project had used oral histories to map places and traces of Aboriginal people’s history in the landscape. It also shaped my emphasis on the importance of pastoralism and its material traces as a focus for Aboriginal group identity and a way of understanding their ancestral past (Harrison 2003). During the south-east Kimberley project, I had become interested in the way in which archaeological sites formed an inseparable link between oral history and place, and the relationship between pastoral narratives and landscape. I had also trialled a number of techniques including mapping oral histories and capturing that data in a Geographic Information System (GIS) that I was keen to continue to expand in my work in New South Wales.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

I began working on this project in June 2000. Aided by local NPWS Aboriginal site officers, I contacted members of several Aboriginal communities in different parts of New South Wales. At this point I wanted to let people know about my ideas and to reconnoiter for involvement in a project that looked at Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people working together in the pastoral industry, and the heritage of this work in the landscape. I had already identified a few potential locations on NPWS reserved land: areas that had previously been identified as places of importance to both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. I was also interested at this early stage in representing different geographic areas of the state, and looking at differences in sheep and cattle pastoralism. I was keen to develop two case-studies that illustrated different aspects of the heritage of the pastoral industry through work at different scales and levels of detail, so that the case-studies would be complementary.

At this early stage, contacting non-Aboriginal communities proved somewhat more

difficult than Aboriginal communities. As a result of the pervasive institutionalisation of Aboriginal people during the twentieth century in Australia, many former pastoral communities composed of both Aboriginal and settler Australian workers had separated and rarely interacted (see further discussion in Greer et al 2002). Contemporary Aboriginal communities now tend to be represented by corporate bodies such as Local Aboriginal Land Councils and elders’ groups, but members of the settler community do not tend to form similar bodies based on shared attachments to heritage and place, making identification of non-Indigenous stakeholders difficult.

The two places selected for study were identified as important to both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community during formal cultural heritage assessment processes. ‘Place’ was used as a focus for bringing together disparate community members to discuss and document a shared cross-cultural past. Two pastoral places that emerged as high priorities for both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community were East Kunderang, located in the upper Macleay River valley in Oxley Wild Rivers National Park; and the former Aboriginal settlement of Dennawan and its associated pastoral properties in Culgoa National Park. Both had a long history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal pastoral work, and in both areas there was a community (or multiple communities) which was keen to participate in a project. These two places, along with several conservation management plans that were being done by the former NPWS in other former pastoral properties now managed as national parks (Peter Freeman Pty Ltd 2002; Godden Mackay Logan Heritage Consultants 2003), became the focus for the ‘Shared Histories of the Pastoral Industry’ project.

I was assisted at this point in making contact with another researcher who had been contracted by the DEC to collect oral history from predominantly non-Indigenous pastoral workers with associations to the former East Kunderang pastoral station. Cindy McRae, whose family managed West Kunderang pastoral property, was able to introduce me to many non-Aboriginal people who had worked or had associations with East Kunderang, and our projects merged to the point where we jointly interviewed many of the non-Aboriginal people for the Kunderang study. Cindy’s insights into the local community allowed me the kind of ‘insider’s’ perspective that is usually only available to people who have lived and worked in a community for much of their lives.

Shortly after this I was lucky enough to be introduced, through project historian Anna Cole, to Dianne Jarrett, an Aboriginal woman from Bowraville living at the time in Sydney, and who had worked and researched as an oral historian in the Macleay/Nambucca region for several years. Dianne and Harry Creamer – an anthropologist who worked for the former NPWS on the ‘sacred sites of significance’ survey in the 1970s – assisted in the process of making contact with Aboriginal communities with interests in Kunderang in Armidale, Walcha, Kempsey and Bellbrook. These contacts proved vital in developing and engaging in a collaborative research project that not only addressed DEC conservation and management interests, but also reflected shared community interests and concerns.

I was similarly assisted in the process of making contact with the predominantly Aboriginal communities with which I worked in Culgoa National Park. DEC historian Sharon Veale, and archaeologist Anthony English had been working with the community near Culgoa National Park since 1996 (English and Veale 2001). They, together with Aboriginal Sites Officer Phil Sullivan, were also vital in introducing me to local people and helping logistically during the planning phase of the project. Phil Sullivan’s input again provided me with an insider’s perspective.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Having selected two field study locations, I moved to get the communities interested in the development of the project. At East Kunderang, an on-site workshop was run to discuss options for the conservation and management of the place (see Jill Sheppard Heritage Consultants 2001a; 2001b). About 40 people attended this meeting, with more coming to later meetings about the project held in Armidale. The research project's aims and methodology had been discussed during previous meetings with individuals and focus groups in Armidale, and at this meeting I wanted to set the details and focus of the Kunderang field study.

One interesting result of these workshops was that participants emphasised the more ephemeral places in the landscape, such as mustering huts and camps where workers congregated and lived, rather than the prominent built structures associated with the station homestead which had tended to be the preoccupation of prior NPWS conservation and management efforts. The way in which these places could be linked together to produce evidence of a system of mustering in the gorge country became one goal of the project. The archaeological and oral history project thus developed around mapping both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people's memories of the landscape and places in it, focusing on trails and patterns of movement.

During interviews, people were asked to map their memories of 'place' onto 1:50 000 scale topographic maps and aerial photographs. These were mapped and registered as separate layers in a GIS, one for each person interviewed. The maps were then used to identify places such as remote huts and camps within and surrounding Oxley Wild Rivers National Park – places that had previously not been documented in detail. Trips (or 'story treks') to these sites were arranged with those people who remembered them, so that the sites could be recorded. Standard archaeological recording of these sites was then undertaken, with further layers in computer-aided drawings developed for detailed mapping of places remembered by participants. An historian was engaged to research surviving documents on East Kunderang to augment the oral history program.

I met with a number of people and groups at Culgoa National Park while developing the methodology for what would become the Dennawan case-study. A program of detailed pre-contact archaeological site recording (English 1997) and a land-use history (Veale 1997) had already been undertaken in Culgoa as part of a model cultural heritage assessment project for newly acquired national parks (English and Veale 2001).

As part of the process of developing these studies, the former Aboriginal pastoral workers' encampment of Dennawan had emerged as an important place that the community wished to document and conserve. The NPWS first came across Dennawan during the survey of sacred sites in the 1970s, and it is widely regarded by the local community as one of the most important Murawari places. It is a site whose history has touched many of the Aboriginal people in the surrounding towns of Weilmoringle, Goodooga, Brewarrina, Walgett and Bourke.

Significantly, not only members of the local Aboriginal community valued this place, but other non-Indigenous locals and former pastoral managers also regarded it as a significant place to the community. Part of the process of researching and recording the settlement involved meeting with some of the few elderly people still alive who remember living at, or visiting, the former reserve. My own interviews with some of these people, coupled with those recorded by Veale, constitute a significant oral resource documenting the history and contemporary attachments to the former reserve.

FIGURE 3.1 Participants' workshop at East Kunderang, April 2001.





FIGURE 3.2 Author with local Muruwari people at Dennawan.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeological site recording was undertaken at a number of places in and surrounding Oxley Wild Rivers and Culgoa National Parks that had been identified during oral history recordings with former pastoral workers and their families. The material remains at sites were recorded using GPS, differential GPS, survey theodolite, or sketched using a tape and compass. This information was then digitised and transferred to a computer. In Oxley Wild Rivers National Park, I only recorded a sample of the different site types identified, as many of them were impossible to reach using a four-wheel-drive vehicle, being only accessible by helicopter, horseback or foot.

For Dennawan, I developed an artefact database that was loaded onto a handheld computer (Husky FS2 with FAMlog) connected to a sub-decimeter differential GPS system (twin Reliance 12 channel Super C/A receivers). I used this database and GPS system to record the locations of all artefacts on the site to an average horizontal spatial accuracy of ± 4 cm. Other pastoral sites in Culgoa National Park were also recorded to a similar level of detail using a combination of differential GPS, handheld GPS and manual recording techniques.

ORAL HISTORY

A range of different oral history techniques were employed, including focus groups, the recording of 'life histories', and formal interviews with individuals around a set of questions or topics. While these interviews were sometimes held off-site, interviews were also recorded on-site with individuals at a place to which they had referred during a previous interview.

At Dennawan, I recorded details of the significance of particular artefacts on the site on a portable MiniDisc recorder as we moved across the site, marking the location to which each set of audio information applied using differential GPS and locating the object or feature on a base plan of the site.

All recorded interviews were transcribed and returned with a copy of the audiotape to informants. At this point people were asked to correct any mistakes and to add or clarify any points they wished to make in the interview. They were also asked to highlight any points that they did not wish to have included in the transcript or which they did not wish to be made public. The corrected versions of the transcripts form the basis for all oral accounts provided in this book. The complete versions of the transcripts are held in the DEC's Historic Heritage Information Management System and by the individuals interviewed for the project.

MAPPING LANDSCAPE BIOGRAPHIES

Many of the oral histories involved mapping places and pathways identified during interviews. This has contributed to a major focus of *Shared landscapes* on the relationship between travel, landscape, history and narrative.

Following methods developed for cognitive mapping (Walsh 1995) and Indigenous land-use mapping (Brody 2001[1981]; Robinson and Assam 1998), and similar methods employed by colleagues Denis Byrne (Byrne and Nugent in prep) and Anthony English (2002), I used topographic maps, satellite images and aerial photos at various scales to form base maps on which informants were asked to identify places which were important to them. While doing these interviews, it became clear that not only did informants want to record places, but also trails and pathways between places, and to map patterns of movement through the landscape. Elsewhere I have referred to these 'representations of space as condensed histories' (cf Ingold 2000: 213) as 'landscape biographies' (Harrison 2002e), as they are representations of the way in which informants perceive their histories lived in, and through, the landscape.

Chris Tilley discusses the ways in which human activities become inscribed within a landscape in which every physical feature is familiar and known, while 'new' places are read in relation to these known places (1994: 27; see also Bender 2001). He notes that the maintenance of pathways and tracks through the landscape is a form of inscription, or 'pedestrian speech act'. The analogy between travel and language forms the basis for an understanding of the connection between oral history and landscape in the case-studies contained in *Shared Landscapes*. Following de Certeau (1984), Tilley (1994: 32) discusses the links between stories and spatial practices: 'Spatial stories are about the operations and practices which constitute places and locales'. The creation or maintenance of a track or pathway through its use refers beyond itself to a network of spatial and temporal dimensions of the landscape (Pearson and Shanks 2001).

DOCUMENTARY HISTORIES

Over the course of the project two historians and myself studied the documentary history of various aspects of the pastoral industry in New South Wales. Anna Cole (2001) produced an annotated bibliography on the state's pastoral industry with a focus on East Kunderang; while Gabrielle Zilber née Werkman (2002) produced a history of land tenure which once again focused on East Kunderang. I supplemented this work on Kunderang with further research at the University of New England's Heritage Centre in Armidale, the Noel Butlin Archives in Canberra, the National Library of Australia, the NSW State Library and Mitchell Library, and the State Library of Victoria.

As previously discussed, my colleague Sharon Veale had already completed a great deal of work documenting both the written and oral histories of Dennawan reserve (1997). Rather than replicate her work, I was generously allowed access to both her published and unpublished research material. I supplemented this with research at Department of Land and Water Conservation office in Dubbo, the Noel Butlin Archives in Canberra, Museum Victoria, the NSW State Library, and NSW State Records. The availability of the archives

of the Aborigines Inland Mission (donated to the NSW State Library towards the end of the project) provided an important source of information, clarifying some details of the presence of those missionaries in the 1930s and the demise of Dennawan in the 1940s.

COMBINING APPROACHES

The methods employed in the study could be considered ‘relatively rapid’ ethnographic (Ervin 1997) or community-based research (Greer et al 2002). ‘Relatively rapid’ ethnographic research may take place over the course of several months utilising the skills of a single researcher, while ‘rapid’ ethnographic research employs a team over a much shorter time frame. Rapid ethnographic assessment processes (REAP) have been adapted from rural and agricultural development projects in which multi-disciplinary teams investigate socio-economic conditions and needs in a particular area (Beebe 2001; Handwerker 2001). These approaches customarily employ semi-structured interviews, expert interviews and focus-group interviews (Handwerker 2001; Low 2002). The US National Parks Service uses REAP to assess the social values of cultural heritage places (eg Leiblow 1987; Low 1987; Crespi 1987). Specific methods within REAP include (Low 2002):

- + historic and archival document review – a review and analysis of relevant archives and documentary sources to provide historical context for the assessments
- + physical traces mapping – archaeological site mapping to use as a base map
- + behavioural mapping – recording the places that people use and their activities at them, including both maps of contemporary use as well as ‘oral history mapping’
- + transect walks – a community-guided walk over a site, with comment on the importance or use of particular parts of a site
- + individual interviews – interviews of users and interest groups
- + expert interviews – with people who hold special knowledge or expertise regarding the history or use of a place
- + impromptu group interviews – with users of a site or place on site
- + focus groups – small group discussion about issues and conflicts
- + participant observation – observations and impressions of everyday life are recorded in a field journal
- + analysis – qualitative data is integrated with physical site maps and other quantitative data collected during the study. The interviews, observations and field notes are used to help interpret collected data.

REAP, as it is employed by the ethnography program at the US National Parks Service, primarily focuses on contemporary uses of places or land, so it is slanted toward collecting information about contemporary users. However, these techniques are equally applicable when recording historical data with information about contemporary social attachments to heritage items. My approach to data collection in this project was therefore informed by REAP methodologies, and involved analysis of documentary archives, the production of base maps, various kinds of interview techniques, and ‘transect walks’ at heritage sites with community members. The timeframes used in REAP are usually very short (perhaps 20–60 person days: Low 2000) and usually carried out by a team.

REAP appeared to offer the best alternative for this kind of study. Along with more ‘traditional’ approaches to oral history/life history and archaeological site recording, the methods employed in the study have allowed the integration of a broad range of different socio-cultural values of the heritage of pastoralism by different community groups. The use of REAP and other techniques over this much longer time allowed a compromise with the deeper integration of a range of data with an understanding of community values that is associated with traditional ethnographic participant-observatory research.



part 2

EAST KUNDERANG PASTORAL STATION,
OXLEY WILD RIVERS NATIONAL PARK

CHAPTER 4

East Kunderang Pastoral Station

On 22 March 2001, a community workshop was held at the East Kunderang homestead to discuss its significance and future management. I had begun researching the history and archaeology of East Kunderang some months earlier, and was keen to discuss my project with a large group of people who had connections to the place. During this meeting, I was startled to overhear a conversation between a local white pastoralist and a younger Aboriginal woman from Armidale that went something like this:

F: I know you. You're Mr McRae, aren't you?

M: Yes, I am ...

F: You are very important to the Dhan-gadi people! All of my brothers and sisters know about you! You used to feed our mother and father inside your house at the dinner table, instead of on the front porch like they were nothing. [crying] You are a very important person to our people! Come here, give me a kiss!

This was the kind of emotional exchange which I could never have anticipated at the out-set of this project – yet similar interactions were repeated on a number of occasions over the period of field research. Although this woman had never met this man before, and had never travelled to or seen East Kunderang with her own eyes, both he and the place were an important part of her personal and collective memory as a Dhan-gadi Aboriginal person.

As I conducted the initial community consultation for this project, I was struck by the number of younger and middle-aged people who had knowledge about East Kunderang. Despite the fact that they may never have visited it or known it physically, it was a part of their collective memory as an icon associated with a particular time in their ancestral past. For many there, the stakeholders' workshop represented an opportunity for a group of people who had once belonged to the same working community to be re-united after more than 30 years in a place which was at once intimately familiar and yet simultaneously unseen.

How did this situation come about? What motivations brought these communities into contact in the first place, and then what drove them apart? I became fascinated with these shared histories of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working together at East Kunderang. But how would I to find out about them? I began with the historical background to East Kunderang pastoral station, looking at land tenure histories and the physical remains that exist at the East Kunderang homestead site. This chapter details that history – my first avenue of investigations in finding out more about the shared histories of East Kunderang.



FIGURE 4.1 Looking down onto the Kunderang Gorges.

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Oxley Wild Rivers National Park is in north-eastern New South Wales, principally taking in the headwaters of the Macleay River, which flows east from the New England tablelands to Kempsey, before draining into the Pacific Ocean. It is the third-largest gazetted wilderness area in New South Wales.

The park straddles the junction of two biophysical regions – the northern tablelands and the north coast – which are separated by the great escarpment (NPWS 1985). The tablelands sections of the park are characterised by altitudes of up to 1200 metres, while the gorgelands drop to as low as 200 metres above sea level. Temperatures in the gorges are higher than in the tablelands, and rainfall is lower.

The tablelands are covered with tall open eucalypt forests, open forests and woodlands, while on the tableland rim are a further seven diverse plant communities, including mixed sclerophyllous shrublands and open eucalypt forest. The gorge slopes are characterised by grassy eucalypt woodland, and most importantly from a conservation perspective, pockets of dry rainforest ranging from open thickets to tall and dense forests on the gentler slopes. In the bottom of the gorges, casuarina and melaleuca woodlands fringe the watercourses.



FIGURE 4.2 The tablelands from the air, looking out across the Apsley River.

These diverse plant communities are also home to an equally diverse set of fauna, many of which are differentiated through their occurrence only within these gorges. The nomination of the park as a World Heritage Wilderness Area reflects these natural values as well as the 'wild and scenic' values of its rivers. These are described as rivers that traverse a natural landscape and have outstanding aesthetic and natural values.

SQUATTERS AND 'RED GOLD': THE INVASION OF THE MACLEAY RIVER VALLEY

The first official non-indigenous exploration of the upper Macleay was by explorer and surveyor-general, John Oxley, who journeyed east and downriver towards the coast from the tablelands in 1818 (Campbell 1922: 226). John Oxley's reaction to the rugged gorge country was to retreat beyond the point of the latter day Moona Plains Station and return to the lush, more familiar environs of the New England tablelands, skirting around the gorge rim on his trip back to Sydney via Port Macquarie. He could not have envisaged the veritable 'goldmine' so highly prized by cedar cutters, manufacturers and dealers which would be discovered by settlers some two decades later (this section after Zilber 2001).

It was not until 1827 that positive news emerged of the rich Macleay lands beyond the marshes (Weingarth 1922). As with other northern coastal regions, cedar cutters were among the first white invaders to venture into the Macleay Valley region. From the late 1820s, cedar cutters were 'leap-frogging' northwards from coastal river to coastal river in search of 'red gold' (Riggs 1986: 3).

These cedar cutters, attracted to the profitable cedar stands, radically altered the landscape – a process that would continue with the clearing of land by pastoralists. Indeed, some of the early cedar cutters later returned to the region to explore pastoral prospects. Their activity was followed closely by shipbuilders in the region. Until 1836, the cedar cutting activities were so extensive that land devoid of the highly prized timber depreciated in value (Macleay River Historical Society 1984: 17). The wood was coveted for its aesthetics, workability, and the manner in which it could be transported – by floating it down the river.

From Ulladulla on the New South Wales south coast to northern Queensland, the cedar-rich eastern coast of Australia was targeted, and within only ten years the Macleay River region was almost devoid of cedar (Lines 1991: 39–40). By 1837, 100 cutters were working in the Macleay (Weingarth 1924). With their nomadic lifestyles and resistance towards the limitations of Crown land or private property, this group had more in common with indigenous groups than later pastoralists:

These men are generally [ex-]convicts, who have become free by servitude; they live in pairs in the dense dark brush; their habitation being merely a few sheets of bark temporarily piled together, as they are continually moving in search of fresh cedar ... the cedar dealers furnish them from time to time with salt provisions, flour, tea, and sugar; and every three or four months the sawyers travel down to the cedar dealers, who live at the mouths of the rivers, for a settlement of their accounts (Hodgkinson 1845: 11).

These values and attributes combined to make them an unsavoury group from the perspective of property owners (Zilber 2001: 6–7). However, their impact appears to have been small. Rowley has argued that the short-term exertion in the cedar-rich coastal areas did not have the same devastating effect on Aboriginal people residing in the same areas as that of later pastoralism (1974: 108–24).

PASTORALISM AT EAST CUNDERANG AND THE MACLEAY RIVER VALLEY 1840–1855

Initially, the colonial government attempted to restrict official 'settlement' of this area by squatters. Prior to 1836 it was illegal to settle outside the bounds of location defined by the 'nineteen counties' (see Chapter 2). In spite of this, when cedar merchant William Rudder

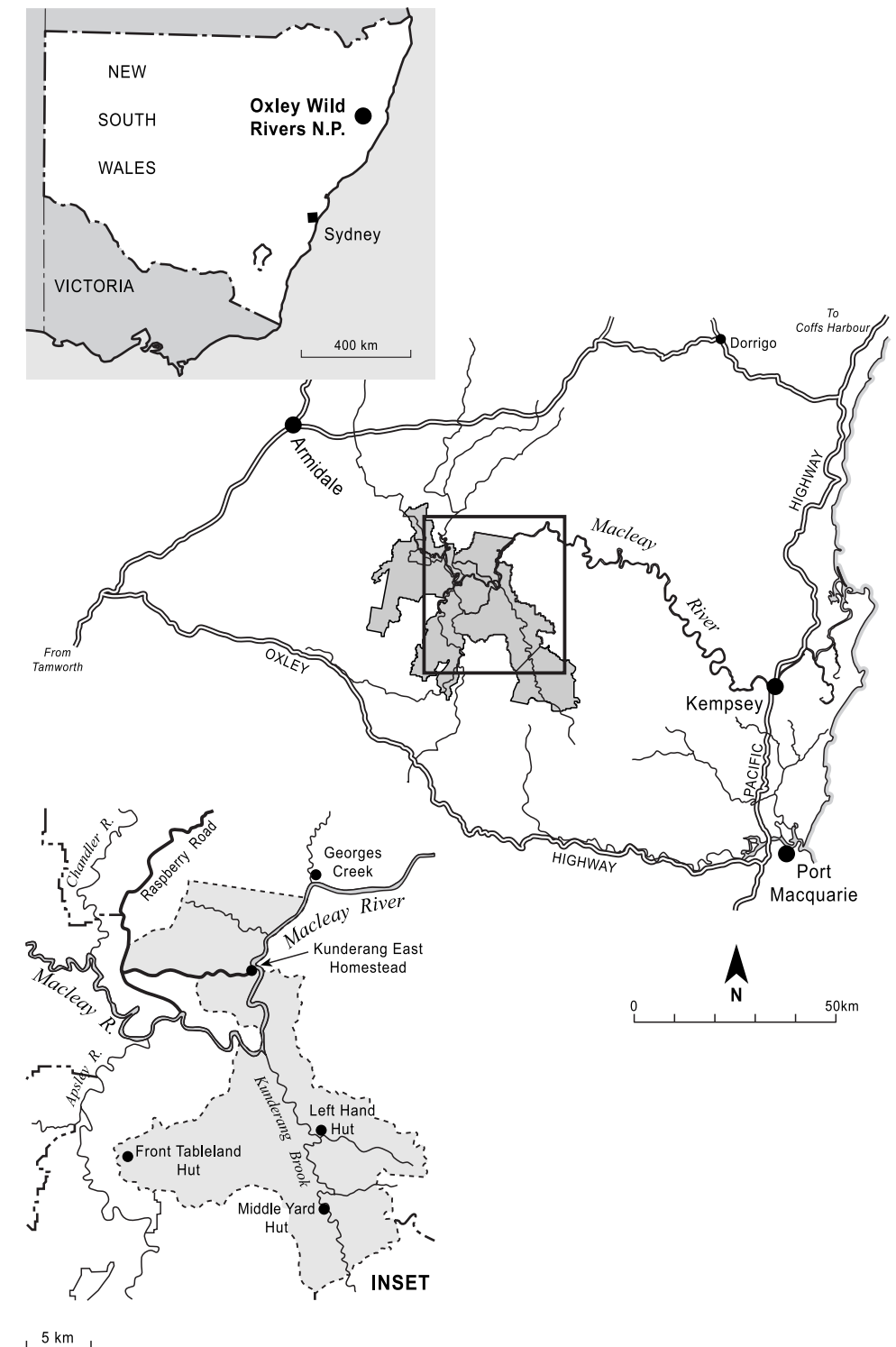


FIGURE 4.3 Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. Inset shows the extent of East Kunderang when NPWS purchased it in 1989.

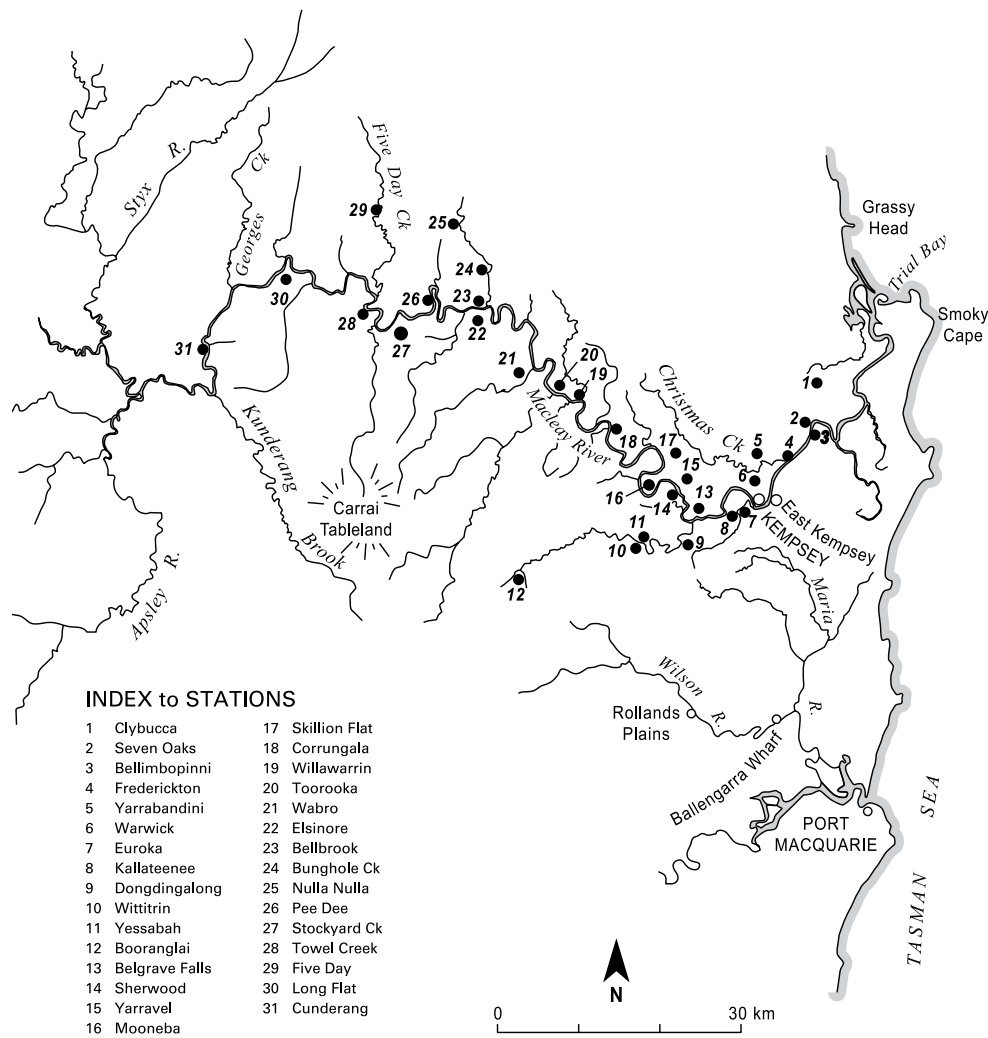


FIGURE 4.4 Pastoral stations on the Macleay c 1847.

established the town of Kempsey in the early 1830s, it was outside the bounds of location. In 1836, an Act of Council licensing the grazing of stock was promulgated to control illegal squatting on Crown lands beyond the boundaries of the nineteen counties. This led to a rush of settlers to the Macleay, largely from government and ex-military residents of the recently closed penal colony at Port Macquarie.

The *Crown Lands Occupation Act* 1836 began the official settlement of the Macleay by squatters. Most squatters were officers, businessmen or wealthy immigrants who possessed the requisite capital to stock big runs (Neil 1972). Pastoralists first ran sheep on the coast side of the gorges (Apsley Falls) before wet weather (as well as dingoes) forced them to drier country on the tablelands. The development of the European pastoral industry was more gradual in this region than in surrounding areas. It was not until 1879 that stock numbers reached anything near those of earlier-settled pastoral districts.

Agriculture in this area appears to have been varied, rather than relying on sheep grazing. Settlements along the Macleay – like other north-coast river communities such as on the Manning, Hastings and Clarence – experimented in sugar cane growing from the 1860s.

Although there is no evidence to suggest that Kunderang followed suit, Jeans has noted that the large-scale graziers upstream – between the Macleay alluvium of Kempsey and Frederickton – did not take part in the agricultural experiment (Jeans 1972: 240–43).

In 1843, Land Commissioner Massie noted that Kunderang had five acres under maize while six people lived on the land in bark huts. Between the years 1877 and 1880, statistics for New South Wales show that maize, followed by grain was the favoured crop in the Macleay district. A consistent state trend until the 1890s favoured grazing above agriculture. Pastoral predominance is also evident in statistics that divided crops such as wheat, maize, barley, oats, rye, millet and grasses into two categories: produce for cattle or for ‘other’ purposes (Statistics 1877; 1880).

Unlike the success of the pastoral industry in the Western division of the state, the northern rivers districts experienced a chequered history of fluctuating pastoral expansion. Pastoralists were attracted by the fertile tablelands of New England and the marginal strips around Kempsey in the upper Macleay. Initial attempts to introduce sheep to the region were supplanted by cattle, which were of marginal consideration to the overall economy of the colony at this time. Graziers along the New England tablelands found that the rugged landscape and the cold wet seasons made cattle a more durable option than sheep (Campbell 1922: 241).

The upper Macleay valley was covered with dense bushland, rainforest and swampland that was expensive to clear, and mountainous terrain which was dangerous to traverse.

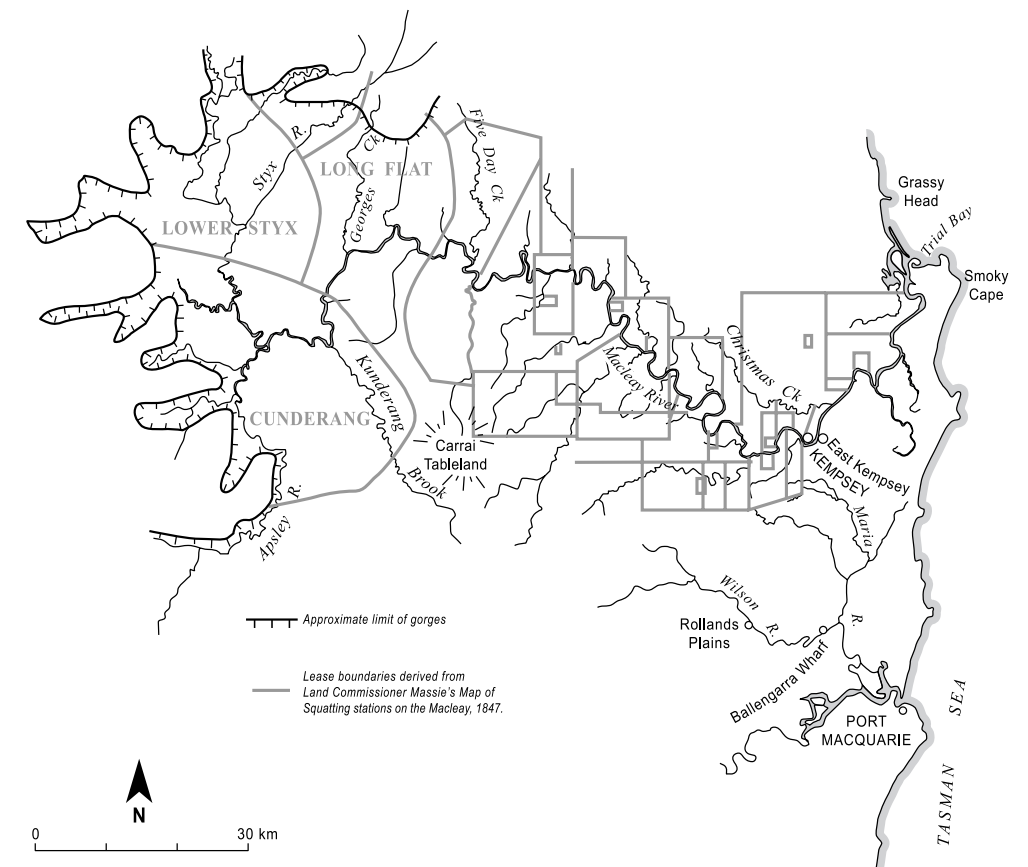


FIGURE 4.5 Pastoral station run boundaries on the Macleay c 1847.



FIGURE 4.6 East Kunderang homestead, c 1920, looking over the corn paddock towards ‘Mary’s view’. A small paddock of lucerne can be seen between the corn and oat paddock. (*Fitzgerald Family Album, DEC*)

Narrow fertile strips of alluvial soils are confined almost exclusively to the riverbanks (Weingarth 1922: 20). These conditions were ideal for cattle or ‘low density’ pastoralism that did not require extensive ringbarking. The convenient sea route to the profitable Sydney markets also made the location ideal (Morris 1989: 16–17). One of the benefits of cattle was that they invariably grouped at watering centres and were less labour-intensive than sheep – that is until mustering time when additional stockmen were required (Jeans 1972: 148). Following the cessation of convict transportation in the early 1840s, labour in rural districts was at a premium. By the end of the nineteenth century, beef, butter and wheat were competing with wool as the nation’s most profitable exports (Jeans 1972: 271).

In 1858, graziers from the New England and Macleay districts petitioned the recently formed New South Wales state government to object to the levy on depastured sheep or stock that roamed into the squatting districts. The petition is significant because it gives an indication of the difficult nature of the environment and its effects upon the quality of stock expected:

That your Petitioners would beg to bring under the notice of your Honourable House, that both from their distance from Sydney and the nature of their climate and soil, they are unable to fatten stock fit for slaughter, and are therefore compelled to sell them as store stock for Port Phillip, or other districts where they can be fattened, and obtaining an average price of 30s per head for cattle and 7s 6d for sheep, when four years old, – an amount which will not enable your Petitioners to pay the proposed assessment (NSW Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, 1858, col 2: 759).

(The assessment was valued at £7 10s per 1000 sheep or 160 head of cattle.)

The first mention of Cunderang (as it was spelt prior to about 1900) appears in Land Commissioner Massie’s report of 1843:

Station:	Cunderang
Name of persons holding licence:	Jobling and Co.
Persons superintending:	J Shufflebotham
Number of residents as per census return:	6 residents
Nature of the buildings on each station:	bark sheds and good stock yards
Number of acres in cultivation and description:	5 acres of maize
Stock:	1325 cattle, 8 horses, 2124 sheep
Estimated extent of run:	16 miles by 5 miles [35 400 ha]
General quality of the soil and herbage:	Grass good but confined by mountains
How watered:	By river and creek
How wooded:	Thickly wooded and partially scrubby
Distance from nearest adjoining station:	11 miles (from Long Flat)
Other remarks:	This is a heifer station under the same license as Toorookoo

(*Massey to Crown Surveyor, 9 January 1843*)

Very little can be surmised regarding the operations of Cunderang during this period, and apart from the returns of the commissioners for Crown lands, no records associated with the station survive from this time. Newspaper reports reveal that two shepherds and their wives were murdered by local Aboriginal people at Cunderang in 1845 (see Chapter 5). Although the term ‘shepherd’ is used, it appears that cattle were the main interest at Cunderang, where they were depastured – the station operating as an outstation of Jobling’s other cattle station, Toorookoo (CCL Macleay River District, 1843–47, SRNSW, reel 2748).

However, some sheep were run on Cunderang during these early years, as they were at most properties on the Macleay at this time. The ‘bark huts’ were not on the site of the present homestead when it was constructed in 1890, although from Massie’s estimates it appears they should have been in approximately the same location. It is possible that one of these bark huts was the one mentioned by J F Campbell, reputed to be moved from East Kunderang to Old Cunderang (now known as West Kunderang) when part of the Cunderang run was sold by the Crawfords to the McDonells and Fitzgeralds in 1889 (Campbell 1933: 67).

‘Improvements’ to the property over the next ten years were minimal. In 1853, an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* described them as including ‘1500 head of cattle and right of station was sold for 41/– per head. The improvements were not extensive; the farming implements, six stock horses, a dray and four bullocks were given in’ (15 Nov 1853).

The nature of the rocky landscape in the Kunderang Gorges meant that it was a less attractive investment in land speculation compared to neighbouring pastoral runs such as Moona Plains (which had a large portion of tableland and gorge rim country) and Long Flat (to the east of Cunderang in the valley). Statistics from an 1880 survey of 860 Macleay landholders show freehold land exceeded leasehold land by 4492.5 acres (Statistics 1880). Typical of nineteenth-century pastoralism, runs such as Cunderang hugged the banks of rivers and creeks, not extending beyond the water ‘lifeline’ more than a few miles (Morris 1989: 17). The strict regulations regarding access to water within the nineteen counties up until the 1830s did not apply to the squatters beyond the settled boundaries (Jeans 1972: 108–110). As mentioned, the solution to free selectors from the perspective of squatters and large landholders was ‘peacocking’ and ‘dummying’ (see Chapter 2). These activities closely paralleled the speculative actions of American land investors (Allen 1956: 60).



FIGURE 4.7 View upriver towards East Kunderang homestead, showing the relationship between the homestead and the river (no date). (Fitzgerald Family Album, DEC)

THE CRAWFORD PERIOD 1855–1889

From its establishment as leasehold property in 1841, Cunderang changed hands four times during the mid-nineteenth century, beginning with Jobling in 1841, who went into partnership with Hitchcock in 1846–47. Jobling transferred the license to Standish Callaghan in 1854, who transferred pasturing rights to Sydney businessman T S Mort in 1856. In the same year Mort transferred the run to Rowley and Richard Hill, who were related by marriage to the Crawford brothers Hugh and Richard of Moona Plains Station near Walcha. Cunderang was eventually transferred to the Crawfords, at which time it became an outstation of its westerly neighbour. In 1878 and 1887, respectively, Hugh and Richard Crawford died unexpectedly in separate accidents, leaving Elizabeth Crawford to manage the station. During the 1890s, Guy Crawford was named as owner, and management of Cunderang was situated at Moona Plains.

With the 'Subdivision of Runs' legislation under the 1884 Land Act, Cunderang was divided into equal portions of 'leasehold area' and 'resumed area' in July 1886. Guy and Alexander Crawford of Moona Plains were listed as the new non-resident owners of Cunderang Station. The Crawfords continued to have a dominant presence in the pastoral region of West Kunderang right up until the 1960s when they retained 15 605 acres within the Parish of Benditi, County of Vernon (SRNSW, map 37912, 1962). The portions were variously divided between Phyllis, Elizabeth, R W, and Dorothea Crawford. Many of the portions had been in the family from the turn of the century and had been gradually expanded (according to an analysis of SRNSW, maps 26845 [1887], 44922 [1916], and 26838 [1923]).

In accordance with the provisions of the *Crown Lands Act* 1884, the colonial government had the difficult task of identifying Crown lands in relation to leaseholdings. In 1886, the Cunderang run was documented as covering the land districts of Walcha and Armidale



FIGURE 4.8 (top) An extract from the New South Wales Crown Land administrative maps for 'Pastoral Run Moona Plains', showing the Cunderang run. (Land Information Centre digital photograph from map 572998, run 357, SRNSW; 10112901.sid; courtesy Department of Lands)

FIGURE 4.9 (below) Alex Crawford at East Kunderang Homestead, c 1900. The Crawfords maintained social connections with Kunderang throughout the Fitzgerald and McDonell periods of management. (Fitzgerald/McDonell Family Albums, DEC)



and the Counties of Vernon, Sandon and Clarke. While exact acreages were not provided, the Crown lands of the Cunderang run were described as:

Commencing on the south-eastern boundary of the Holding; thence a line Bearing north 43 degrees west about 5 miles to the confluence of the Apsley River with the Macleay River; thence the Macleay or Styx River upwards to the confluence of the Chandler River and the Muddy Water; thence a line bearing north 45 degrees east to the eastern boundary of the Holding (Supplement to NSW Government Gazette, no 369, 6 July 1886, Department of Lands notice, p 4519).

The holding was estimated at 49 435 acres and the lessee in 1889 was Mr Guy Henry Crawford (Hansen 1889: 50–51).

Once again, this was a period of relatively little improvement to Cunderang, although it is possible that some huts were constructed. The run was managed as an outstation of Moona Plains pastoral property, owned and managed by the

Crawfords. Alec McDonell recalls that when he went to the property in 1919, there were rumours of an earlier building just below Kunderang homestead which had been washed away by floodwaters. In 1933 J F Campbell reported that an original homestead was moved from East Kunderang to West ('Old') Kunderang when the Crawfords sold part of the Cunderang run in 1889 to Fitzgerald and the McDonells (Campbell 1933: 67). The Crawfords probably used this building, of which no evidence remains today, as an outstation at West Kunderang. Later, Waller, who acquired West Kunderang, occupied the hut.

THE FITZGERALD PERIOD 1889–1928

In 1889, Cunderang became an owner-occupied run with the transferral of sections to Joe Fitzgerald and Alex McDonell. This component of the newly divided Cunderang was now known as 'Cunderang East of Resumed Area' (no 585A). What remained of the Crawford's Cunderang holdings became 'Cunderang West of Resumed Area' (no 586A).



FIGURE 4.10 Extract from 'Index map of NSW showing Pastoral Holdings dated 1886' showing the extent of the Cunderang run (no 564) and its relationship with Moona Plains (no 387). (Land Information Centre digital photograph from a SRNSW map; courtesy Department of Lands)

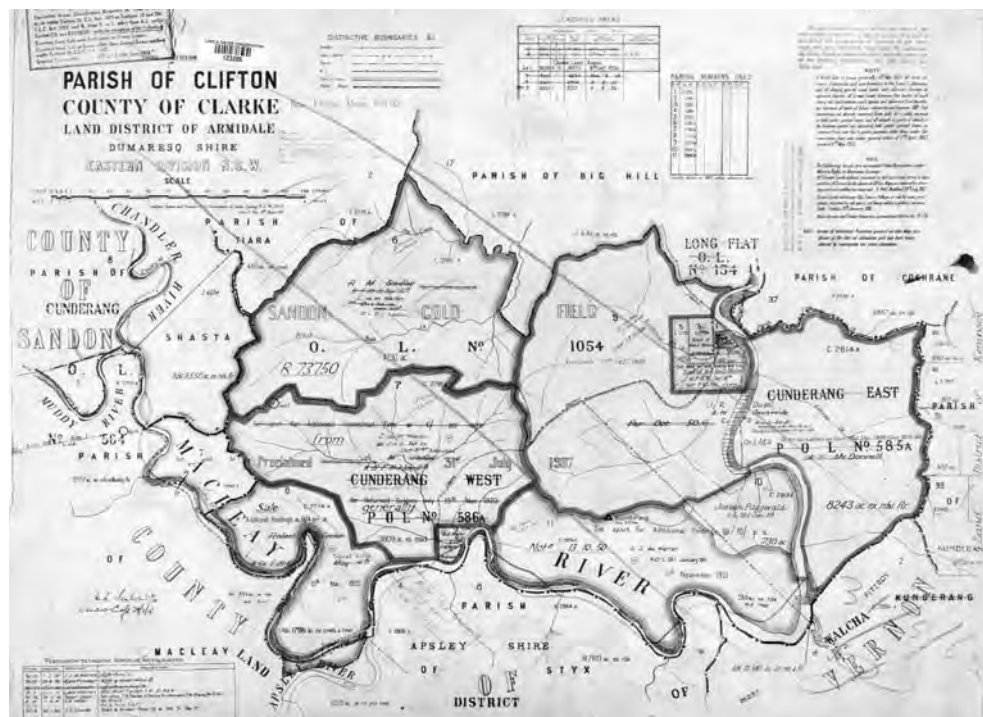


FIGURE 4.11 Extract from 'County Clarke, Parish of Clifton, edition 3, dated 01/01/1925', showing 'Cunderang West' and 'Cunderang East' resumed areas. (Land Information Centre digital photograph from a SRNSW map; courtesy Department of Lands)



FIGURE 4.12 (left) The Fitzgerald and McDonell Family photograph albums, collected and annotated by Chris Sullivan (1989) provide an invaluable source of documentation for understanding the history of East Kunderang.

FIGURE 4.13 (right) Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald, seated with Eileen, Addie and Charlie c 1912. (Fitzgerald/McDonell Family Albums, DEC)

The Fitzgeralds originally purchased the Moona Plains–Kunderang run in partnership with the McDonells. However, shortly after its sale, the Fitzgeralds bought out the McDonells' portion, an act which initially caused financial hardship for Joe Fitzgerald. He was forced to spend some time working away from his home station as a contract drover. Importantly, though, the Kunderang sale started a period of major construction and improvement on the property.

Most of what we know about the Fitzgerald family comes from the recollections of Alec McDonell, collected by Chris Sullivan and written up as an oral history report for the former NPWS (Sullivan 1989). Sullivan also collected and summarised archival materials held by the descendants of the Fitzgeralds, copies of which are now held in the DEC office in Armidale. Joseph (Joe) Fitzgerald, who purchased East Kunderang in 1889, was born in Dungog in the 1850s, the fifth and last child of Joseph and Eliza (née Barry), who had arrived in Australia in 1838 from the United Kingdom. Joe Fitzgerald married Katherine McDonell in 1880, and lived for some time at Dingo Creek near Taree, where their children Joseph Patrick, Jack and Des were born. They later moved to Katherine's family home in Cundletown in 1885–86, where Edward, Mary and Jim were born. Katherine Fitzgerald lived at Port Macquarie and Kempsey before moving to Kunderang in 1893, after which three more children, Jessie Eileen, Catherine Adelaide ('Addie') and Flora Alexandria were born. After Edward was drowned in the Macleay River just below the homestead in 1901, a pregnant Katherine Fitzgerald moved back to Cundletown for the birth of their last child, Charlie. The Fitzgerald family was resident in whole or in part at Kunderang over the period 1889–1928.

During the Fitzgeralds' occupancy, Kunderang supported a large number of people and operated at a higher capacity of cattle than in previous years. Photographs of the Fitzgerald family, annotated by Sullivan, provide a rich and vibrant record of family life around the turn of the nineteenth century. The photographs also reveal the physical changes and building activity that occurred over this period. The Fitzgerald period was the main period of building construction on the station.



FIGURE 4.14 (left) Fitzgerald and McDonell family groups at the homestead in 1919: (l-r, back row) Mary Fitzgerald, Jack Fitzgerald, Flora McDonell, Flora Fitzgerald, Charlie Fitzgerald, Mary McDonell; (middle) Des Fitzgerald, Mrs Fitzgerald, Alec McDonell, Eileen Fitzgerald; (front) Eileen, Alex, Edward and Kathleen (Jack Fitzgerald's children). (*Fitzgerald/McDonell Family Albums, DEC*)

FIGURE 4.15 (right) Jim Fitzgerald relaxing in one of the four hammocks which hung along the sides of the East Kunderang Homestead (no date). (*Fitzgerald/McDonell Family Albums, DEC*)

The stockyards and a building later used as a corn shed are thought to have existed on the site when the Fitzgeralds arrived in 1889 (Jill Sheppard Heritage Consultants 2001b: 46–47). A three-roomed building with hip roofing and vertical plank walls was constructed in 1890, and in 1892 this became the kitchen wing comprising a storeroom, kitchen and schoolroom.

Mr Joe Small was contracted from Manning in 1893 to build the second stage of the homestead. This was designed with hip roofing around a central corridor with verandahs on all sides. It was constructed of local red cedar planks with red gum or box gum structural timbers – thought to have been harvested from Top Creek – and sawn in a pit constructed on the property. A dining room, built around the turn of the century, was located in the space between the kitchen wing and main bedroom wing. A gabled roof, above the gap between the two buildings, converted the verandah on the east side of the kitchen block as a breezeway. This breezeway was the workers' main entrance. Later a slab hut, built at Top Creek as a mustering hut, was relocated to Kunderang for use as 'bachelors' quarters'.

During this period the family occupied the bedroom wing, with the verandah used as a 'sleep-out' with hammocks hung from hooks on the verandah posts. A tennis court, constructed of antbed base, was also installed. By 1900, a bread oven, also reputedly made from antbed material, was operating at the back of the house.

Other outbuildings and yards – including a forge, barn, pig sty, chicken run, stallion stable and yard, and loft – were installed at or around this time. A beef house and stockman's quarters were constructed in the period 1911–1940.

Even at the turn of the century, Kunderang was considered an isolated property, and self-sufficiency was therefore highly important. To achieve this, the Fitzgeralds grew grapes, oranges, mandarins, quince, peaches, nectarines, pears, apricots, almonds, apples and walnuts in their orchard. Located near the homestead were beehives, a vegetable and decorative garden including jacaranda trees and hibiscus shrubs. Corn, maize, oats and lucerne were grown as stock feed in various paddocks around the homestead.

During the Fitzgerald period, mustering huts and yards were constructed at Front Tableland (Happy Land), Top Creek and Middle Yards. Yards were also constructed at Left Hand and at the headwaters of the Kunderang Brook on a block later taken up by Alan Youdale in 1930. Photographs of the yards at both Left Hand and Middle Yard exist from



FIGURE 4.16 Eileen and Mary Fitzgerald swimming in the Macleay just below the homestead. (*Fitzgerald/McDonell Family Albums, DEC*)

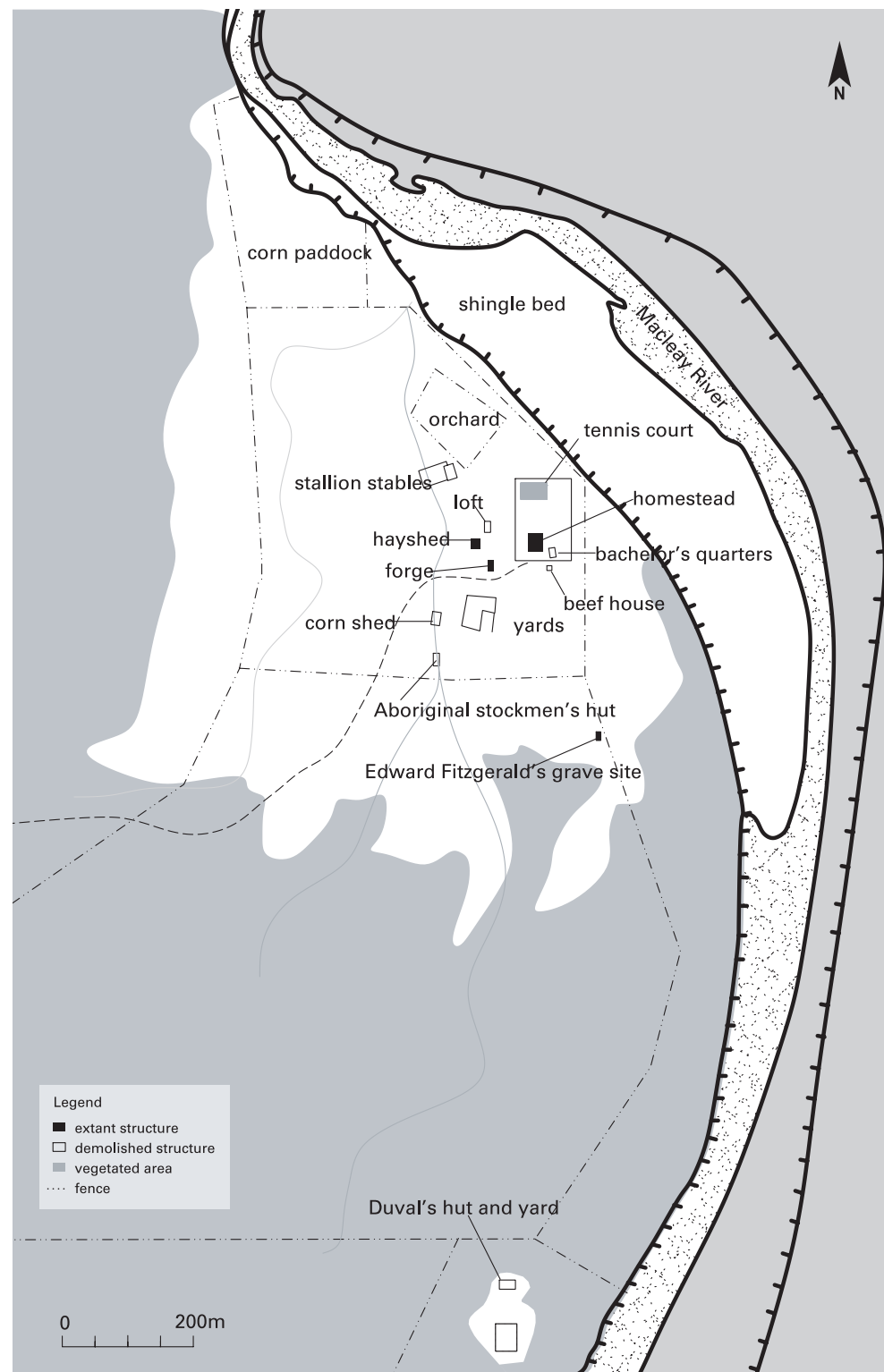


FIGURE 4.17 Site plan of Kunderang homestead, compiled from various sources including photographs, aerial photographs, oral accounts and portion plans, showing the locations of buildings discussed in the text.



FIGURE 4.18 (left) Kathleen Fitzgerald on a fence near the meat shed at East Kunderang (no date). (Fitzgerald/McDonnell Family Albums, DEC)

FIGURE 4.19 (right) The Fitzgeralds on the verandah of the East Kunderang homestead in 1919. (Fitzgerald/McDonnell Family Albums, DEC)

this period. The Top Creek hut was moved from Top Creek to become the bachelors' quarters at the homestead some time around 1920. At this time Sunderland, who had selected the block at Middle Yard in a ballot, constructed a new hut directly in front of the old one.

CHANGES IN LAND TENURE DURING THE FITZGERALD PERIOD

The very nature of the Macleay gorge country made East Kunderang a challenging location for a pastoral station. Survey and valuation reports from 1877 to 1899 recommended that the land along the river systems were the best available, and that surrounding areas would profit from ringbarking and burning to improve access to grass lands which were considered plentiful. But grazing conditions were hampered by the precipitous gorge landscape 'almost barren of grass', and isolation and inaccessibility – except on horseback – made small settlements in the area unlikely (Report for Appraisalment of Rent or License Fee, Remarks from Walcha Inspector to Chairman of the Local Land Board, 18 Oct 1887).

Another report on the Kunderang holding in October 1887 was similarly less than enthusiastic about the nature of the land, describing its grazing capacity as equivalent to 20 acres to one sheep or equivalent cattle:

It is a country that requires almost constant rain to keep up the grass ... [due to] the loose stony nature of the hills. It is quite inaccessible except on horseback. The available country which could be improved by ringbarking is about one sixth of the whole. I do not consider it is a run which could be profitably worked except in conjunction with another to which the cattle could be moved. It is purely a breeding place. I should think there is about 10 000 acres in the whole holding which should be ringbarked in order to make the run profitable, but the expenditure would be too great under the ... tenure – I consider that the ... rent would be very excessive in this area (Inspector John Doyle to Walcha Land Office, 26 October 1887).

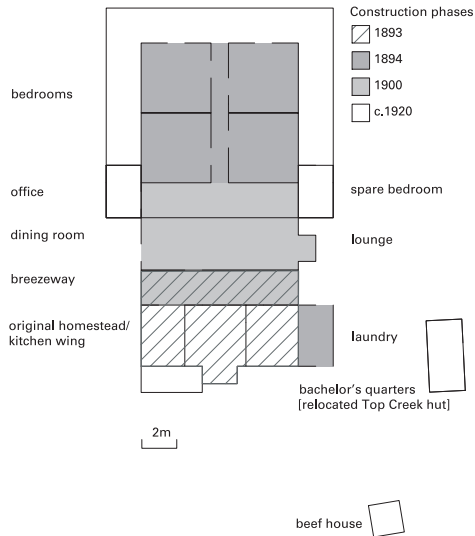
At this inquiry into the rent at Kunderang, one of the lessees, Guy Henry Crawford agreed with the investigator's evidence and stated that he had '20 and 30 years experience in this country', and could not afford the cost involved in ringbarking. Crawford complained to the Armidale Land Board in 1888 that the expense of running the property was out of proportion to the rent (half a penny per acre) expected, given the carrying capacity of the



FIGURE 4.20 (top) The homestead and outbuildings, c 1900, looking from Yard Creek towards 'Mary's view' and Carrai, with the orchard, hay shed and loft in foreground. (Fitzgerald/McDonell Family Albums, DEC)

FIGURE 4.21 (centre) Plan of the construction sequence of East Kunderang homestead, c 1889–1920.

FIGURE 4.22 (below) Middle Yard hut, taken during an excursion in 1912. (Fitzgerald/McDonell Family Albums, DEC)



In order to safeguard their station, the Fitzgeralds placed strategic lands on their own runs under the names of relatives – a clear case of ‘dummying’. Table 4.1 shows the family connections in land title portions as depicted in parish map records, with the Fitzgeralds and McDonells being proportionately the primary secure title runholders.

land (Guy Henry Crawford to Local Land Board, Armidale, 25 April 1888; and see Appraisement by Local Land Board of rent to be paid for next period of five years of Homestead or Pastoral Lease, Armidale, May 1888, resulting in reduction of rent).

These difficulties were resolved with a transfer of Kunderang West holding (no 586) from Crawford to Mr Waller in 1900. Crawford requested the southern boundary of his run be extended to create two workable runs (Crawford to Minister for Lands, 17 September 1900). When the former NPWS was engaged in valuing the Kunderang estate in 1988, the Armidale Pastures Protection Board estimated the carrying capacity of the run to be around 520 store cattle, or one animal per 61 hectares (Kerry T Barrett, Valuer-General’s Department, NE 85/V/91A, February 1988: 2).

The Fitzgerald tenure from the 1890s to 1960s was a period of considerable movement of land title, including a period where the Fitzgeralds were compelled to rescind a part of their title holdings. In 1892, the Bank of New South Wales assumed ownership of Portion 1 – or 73 acres of Kunderang East Station along the left bank of the Macleay River in the County of Clarke, Parish of Clifton – under the guidelines set by the Additional Conditional Purchase. In 1910 the bank also purchased Portion 3 – 150 acres next to Portion 1 (Grant of Land Purchased by Conditional Sale, CP 1892/87 Armidale, Register Book, vol 3852, f 97, 28 July 1892; and CP 1910/46 Armidale, 5 May 1910).

TABLE 4.1 Leaseholders for Kunderang and immediate surrounds

PARISH STYX, COUNTY VERNON
Flora Alexander Fitzgerald & Joseph Patrick Fitzgerald’s holdings: Portion 1 1899 Conditional Purchase (40 acres)
• Portion 2 1899 Conditional Lease (120 acres); 1903 Additional Conditional Purchase (120 acres)
• Portion 3 1903 Conditional Lease (480 acres)
AB McDonell: Portion 9 1945 Crown Land Lease Area no 5210 (3585 acres)
WE Davison: Portion 7 1919 Crown Land Lease Area no 2854 (4892 acres)
PARISH FITZROY, COUNTY VERNON
Flora Alexander Fitzgerald: Portion 2 1921 Crown Lease (13 340 acres) • Portion 3 1936 Crown Lease (10 375 acres)
Mary Gertrude Fitzgerald: Portion 4 1921 Crown Lease (11 800 acres)
AB McDonell: Portion 4 1939 Part Additional Crown Lease (10 150 acres)
• Portion 5 1939 Part Additional Crown Lease (1994 acres)
PARISH BIG HILL, COUNTY CLARKE
Mary McDonell: Portion 1 1891 (50 acres)
Joseph Fitzgerald: Portion 34 1907 (60 acres) • Portion 29 1907 (40 acres)
Mary Fitzgerald: Portion 34 1907 (60 acres) • Portion 29 1907 (40 acres)
AJ Rafferty: Portion 17 1919 Homestead Farm (4446 acres); 1927 Crown Lease • Portion 17 includes 2 Special Leases held by A J Rafferty (50 acres) [CR54423] and R J O’Neill (50 acres) [R51475] • Portion 23 1925 Homestead Farm (4851 acres) 1927 Crown Lease
PARISH CLIFTON, COUNTY CLARKE
Joseph Fitzgerald: Portion 1 1892 Conditional Purchase (73 acres) • Portion 10 1922 Conditional Lease (730 acres)
Bank of NSW: Portion 3 1910 Additional Conditional Purchase or capital value (150 acres)
• Portion 5 1918 Additional Conditional Purchase (277 acres) [set apart for Additional Holdings at £1 pa]
• Portion 1 (73 acres) registered on 1961 Parish Map.
PARISH CLIFTON, COUNTY CLARKE
JJ de Warren: [held substantial portions of Cunderang West]
Portion 9 1928 Additional Crown Lease (730 acres); 1921 A W Beuzeville [Occupational License no 1054 – set apart for Additional Holdings at 10/– pa]
JR Duval: Portion 9 1954 Crown Lease (4446 acres) Area no 5219
Lewis de Warren Waller: Portion 6 Held by R M Sadler under 1919 Homestead Lease Farm transferred to Waller under 1937 Crown Lease (4230 acres) Area no 4423
Rupert Markham Sadler: Portion 7 in Kunderang West from 1920, set apart for Additional Homestead Lease Farm @ 10/– per acre (3809 acres) transferred to Waller under Crown Lease 1930

THE SOLDIER SETTLEMENT SCHEME AND EAST KUNDERANG

In 1919, East and West Kunderang were targeted as potential sites for returned soldiers. Crown lands were set apart for an original homestead farm (no 1133 and no 966) to be offered to ‘Returned Soldiers Exclusively’. Like the conditional title of the Soldier Settlement Scheme, the Homestead Farm Lease was also a five-year contract, after which time and having followed conditions of residence and land maintenance, the property could be granted to the occupiers. Application for the lease was competitive. The *Crown Lands Consolidation Act*, section 44, declared that discharged soldiers who held a qualification certificate under the *Returned Soldiers Settlement Act* could be given preference when



FIGURE 4.23 Alec McDonell in the Left Hand yards (no date). (*Fitzgerald/McDonell Family Albums, DEC*)



FIGURE 4.24 Middle Yards, looking out from the hut to the yards and paddock (no date). (*Fitzgerald/McDonell Family Albums, DEC*)

applying for a Homestead Farm Lease. Besides residency requirements, occupants were also expected to restrict rabbit and prickly-pear growth, to retain green timber for shelter and shade, and to build six-wire fences to define the boundary of their holdings (NSW *Government Gazette*, 8 August 1919: 4474–75).

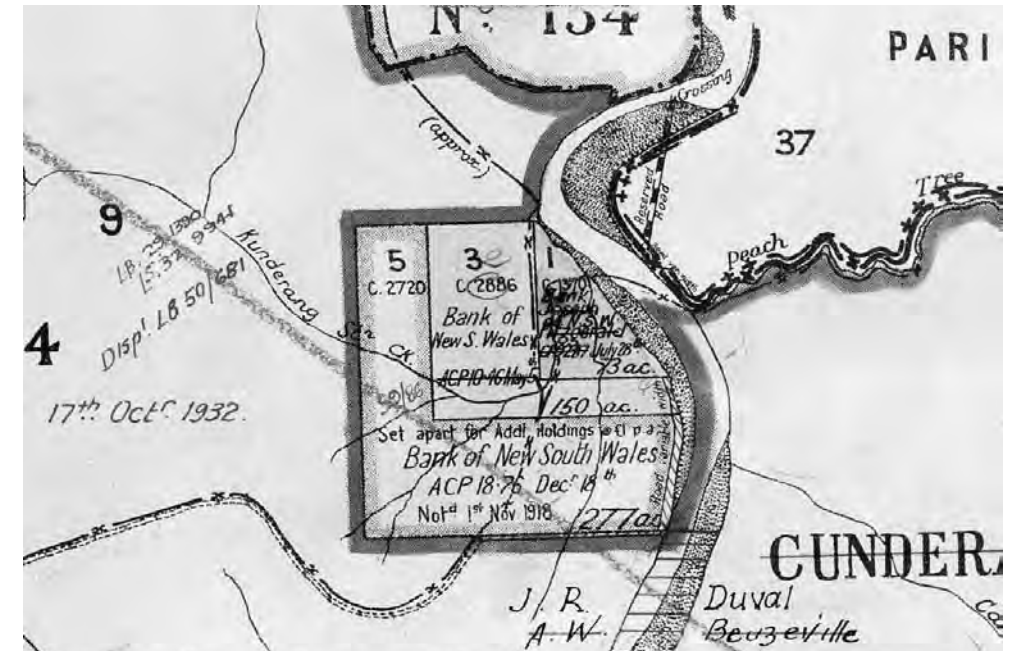


FIGURE 4.25 NSW Crown Land Administrative Maps. Extract from Parish of Clifton, County of Clarke map dated 1925 showing portions 1, 3 and 5 under the control of the Bank of NSW. (*Land Information Centre digital photograph from a SRNSW map; courtesy Department of Lands*)

Portions 6, 7 and 8 in the Parishes of Clifton and Big Hill, County of Clarke were the areas selected. Rupert Markham Sadler reserved the first two portions of 4230 acres (Portion 6) within Kunderang East and 3809 acres (Portion 7) within West Kunderang by 15 September 1919 and 12 May 1920, respectively. Robert Crocker occupied 1795 acres of Portion 8 on 14 May 1920 within West Kunderang. Both men paid 10 shillings per acre for rights to the land.

Details in the *Government Gazette* underscored the properties' isolation. The nearest main towns of Armidale and Kempsey were 60 to 70 miles away, and it was five miles to the nearest telephone and post office in Georges Creek. The surveyor described the land quality as:

Steep mountainous country, mainly slate formation; there are areas of basalt, and the frontage is chiefly granite; grey and gritty loam; very stony and rocky; small areas on creek are good loam; whole area open to fairly dense forest country; timbered with white and red gum, stringybark, oak and apple, with patches and areas of brush; water abundant and sufficient in Macleay River and water in ordinary seasons in Top Creek. Average rainfall, about 40 inches; suitable for strong dry stock; when improved about three quarters of area will become good, sound, sweet grazing country (NSW Government Gazette, 8 August 1919: 4475).

By 1937 Sadler's holdings had been transferred under Crown lease agreement to Lewis de Warren Waller, who was at the time the predominant landholder in West Kunderang. Croker maintained his portion (SRNSW map 33854, Parish Clarke, County Clifton 1923), while under the ballot system, Jack Duval and Alan Youdale gained control of various leases surrounding Kunderang.

KUNDERANG UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF ALEC MCDONELL 1928–1967

Alec McDonell was the grandson of Alex McDonell, who had been part of the original Fitzgerald-McDonell partnership which purchased Kunderang in 1889. The McDonells



FIGURE 4.26 (top) Alec McDonnell at Georges Creek in 1962. (Courtesy University of New England Heritage Centre: P2345)

FIGURE 4.27 (below) Bark hut built by Alan Youdale in 1930. (DEC)

were related to the Fitzgeralds through marriage, and Alec McDonnell was born at the family home in Cundletown in 1909. Alec first came to Kunderang in 1919, and in October 1928, at the age of 19, he returned to work under Des Fitzgerald, then for a short period Herb O'Neill, before taking over the management of the station for the Fitzgerald family in 1933. Alec married Thelma in the 1940s, and she came to live with him at East Kunderang. After two large floods in 1949 and 1950, they decided to move to Georges Creek, where they purchased the former police station as their family home and the base from which Alec managed Kunderang. Alec progressively purchased several hold-

ings within the centre of the Fitzgerald holdings at East Kunderang over this period.

Alec McDonnell's recollections of life and work on East Kunderang form an important resource for understanding the operations of the station under his period of management. This issue is discussed in detail by Sullivan (1989).

SOLDIER SETTLERS AND SUBSISTENCE PASTORALISTS

In the period 1920–1960 the composition of properties surrounding Kunderang underwent major change. This occurred principally through the selection of a number of smaller leases that had lapsed under the Fitzgeralds and Crawfords as their control of the Moona Plains and Kunderang runs grew weaker. These portions were taken up by a number of soldier settlers and small-scale subsistence pastoralists who would later become important names in the local history of the area. These included such figures as Youdale, Lawrence, Sunderland, Dyson, Duval and Waller.



ALAN YODALE

In some ways Alan Youdale was typical of newcomers to the Kunderang ravines (Lindsay Youdale interview with Don Hardman, 1992, in Ashley 1993). In 1929–30 Alan obtained a lease in the head of the Kunderang Brook after one of the Fitzgeralds' leases had expired. In addition to his long-term connections with Kunderang, through his friendship with Alec McDonnell and his associations with

other Kunderang workers, Alan Youdale's history in the gorge country is representative of the small-scale subsistence grazing in the area which continued into the 1980s.

FIGURE 4.28 (top) Youdale's hut c 1950. (DEC)

FIGURE 4.29 (below) Alan Youdale downstream from his hut. Note the rabbit skins. In good weather, Alan would often camp under a bark lean-to such as this. (DEC)



Born at Timaru on the South Island of New Zealand in 1900, Youdale moved to Australia in 1914 after working his passage peeling vegetables in the ship's galley. He travelled through eastern Australia shearing for several years before settling in Gilgandra with his first wife, with whom he had three children. Youdale moved to Walcha in 1929 after the failure of his marriage, and first inspected the country around the headwaters Kunderang Brook in that year. With the assistance of 'an Aboriginal guide', Youdale obtained horses from East Kunderang and built a small bark hut as a temporary shelter beside a set of yards near the Kunderang Brook. These yards had been constructed previously by the Fitzgeralds on Resumed Area FR 55340, Parish of Loch, County Vernon. This was probably the top set of yards in Fitzgerald's run.

A new timber-slab hut was commenced in 1930, and its remains still stand today. With the assistance of a yard builder from Walcha, the hut was built of local stringy-bark and messmate timber, dressed with adze and broadaxe. During this period Alan married his second wife Beryl Coyne from Walcha, with whom he had six more children: Ross, Lindsay, Ron, John, David and Sue. Beryl and the children, including Alan's daughters Betty and Joyce from his first marriage, often stayed in Walcha while Alan worked at the Brook on his own.

During this period, Youdale made a living by trapping rabbits and selling their skins. He and a Danish friend would trap about 3000 rabbits every three months, selling the skins to a dealer in Walcha. During the Depression years this would bring in up to £50 per month. Water from Kunderang Brook was carried to the hut every day because of the transportation difficulties in fitting water tanks. A small dam near the hut was dug by hand with the assistance of a horse-drawn scoop, and was used for watering stock in the house paddock. Youdale ran 600–700 head of cattle, along with several milking cows and up to 14 horses. In 1940 he built a house on land he purchased on top of the Cedar Creek gorge. Alan Youdale continued to work his lease until his death in 1986. Part of Youdale's land on the Kunderang Creek was acquired for inclusion in Werrikembe National Park in 1984.

JACK DUVAL

In the 1950s, Jack Duval won Portion 9 (Parish Clifton, County Clarke 1954 Crown Lease (4446a) Area no 5219) in a ballot through the Lands Department when that part of the property's perpetual lease expired. Jack and his wife Grace lived for a time at Georges Creek, building a small cabin on their Kunderang property in 1958 when they moved to Moree and needed to use the property more intensively. They built a small hut and a yard: 'Well, actually it was more or less just a bit of a holding, I think there were two yards, just more or less a holding yard and when we took cattle out we generally went up river and camped at West Kunderang one night and then on up' (Grace Duval interview, 22 June 2001).

At around this time, the cedar baron Hayden was scouting the upper Macleay for remaining stocks of red cedar. Grace Duval remembers seeing him haul two huge cedar logs out of Kunderang:

We did see another one being hauled up out of West Kunderang one day. It was a long straight tree, beautiful log. They were using two tractors. They had one on top and one down where the log was and they just hauled it up to the first one, then they'd anchor it there and move the other one on a bit and give it another bit of leeway to pull it again with the second tractor. Eventually they got it up with the aid of these two tractors. It was really most interesting just seeing this just great log coming, it was coming over the creek that goes down to West Kunderang (Grace Duval interview, 22 June 2001).

At this time Hayden built a road part of the way into East Kunderang from the tableland. This allowed Grace and Jack Duval to bring their four-wheel-drive vehicle some way into their block on East Kunderang from Wollomombi, packhorsing their supplies in the rest of the way. This road similarly acted as an access road for Alec McDonell to East Kunderang itself.

UNDER THE OWNERSHIP OF KELLION ESTATES 1967–1988

In 1967, when C H Kellion of Kellion Estates purchased the property from the Fitzgeralds and Duval (the cost per acre was \$1 for the Fitzgeralds' land and \$1.50 for Duval's), he started major works including the construction of roads to the homestead and other parts of the property (C H Kellion, managing director, Kellion Estates Pty Ltd to John Payne, Land Board Office, Armidale, 3 February 1978). Kellion Estates also made comprehensive renovations to the homestead buildings. Large sections of the house were restumped, the homestead verandahs were rebuilt, kitchen wing demolished, and a new fibro kitchen wing constructed in the same spot. The homestead was refurbished to accommodate the new manager employed in 1973, Arlie Wratten, and his family. The stockmen's hut was rebuilt in the original location, and in the late 1960s electricity was connected to the property for the first time.

Kellion Estates built three new mustering huts and renovated the mustering yards at Front Tableland, Middle Yards and Left Hand. These replaced earlier timber structures and in general re-used existing stockyards built by the Fitzgeralds in each location (see further discussion in Chapter 6).

BUSHWALKING AND A NATIONAL PARK PROPOSAL

Long before the establishment of the NPWS, the area was targeted by the state's burgeoning concern to preserve its natural heritage. For example, a Bird and Animal Sanctuary was declared upon a section of Crown land north of East Kunderang – a move that effectively blocked lease expansion northwards (SRNSW map 34940, Parish Big Hill, County Clarke, 1960). The distinct 'natural' values of the upper Macleay were recognised as early as the 1920s. In 1929, ornithologist J J de Warren, who held the bulk of West Kunderang, proposed the establishment of a national park that covered the Kunderang ravines, while Campbell also championed this cause in the 1920 and 1930s (Campbell 1922; 1933).

A tradition of trekking into the Macleay gorges developed during the twentieth century and pre-empted the eventual proclamation of East Kunderang within the Oxley Wild Rivers World Heritage Wilderness Area. A 'bushwalking cult' (Prineas 1997: 32) which developed throughout New South Wales in the 1930s was closely linked to the fledgling environmental movement. In 1968, Frank Leyden's Macleay gorges article in *Sydney Bushwalker* magazine recounted Alec McDonell's history of local bushwalking (Leyden 1968; see also Wyborn 1949):

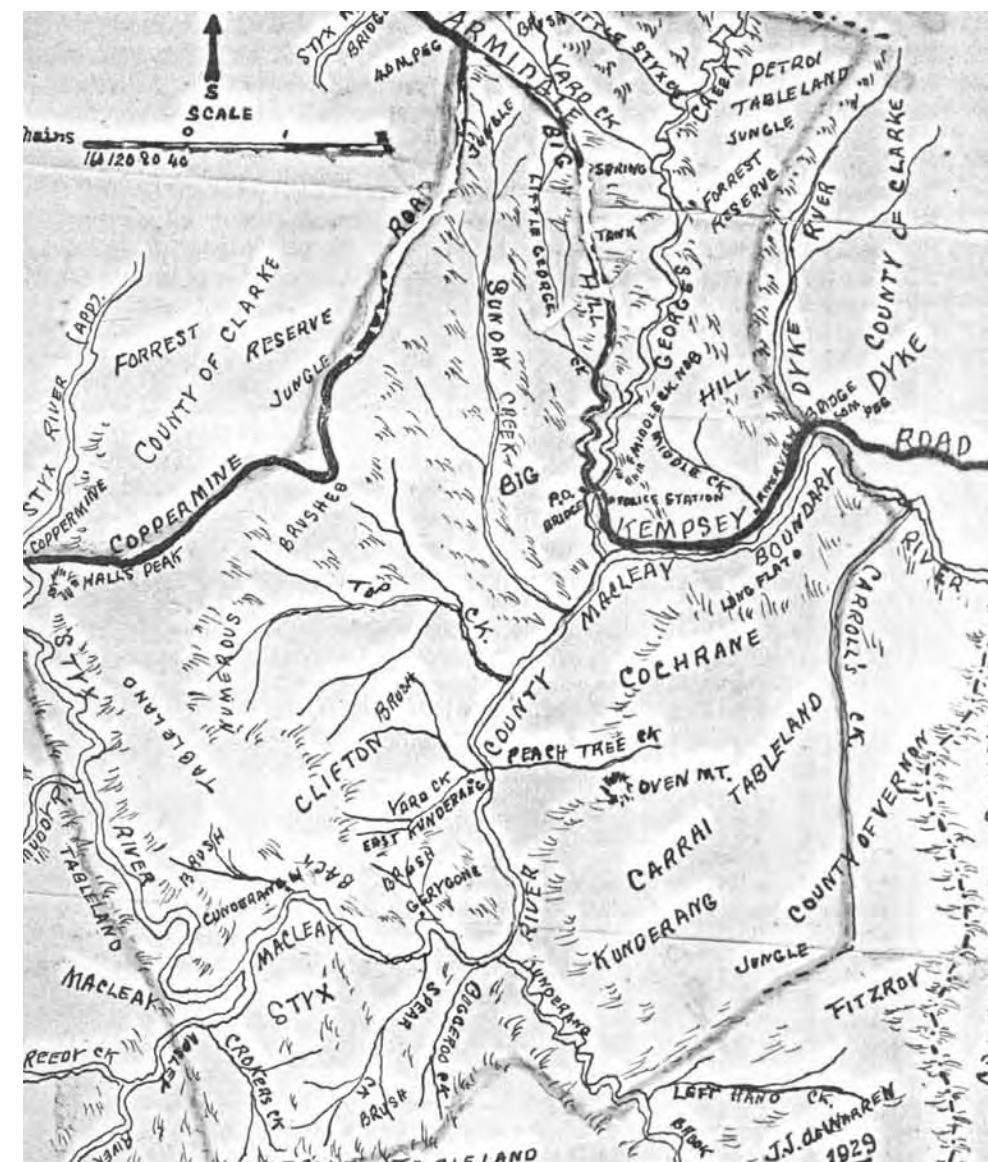


FIGURE 4.30 J J de Warren's 1929 map showing the proposed national park. (Original map, donated to NPWS)

There was a bushwalker from Sydney during the war who came down Kunderang with a push-bike. Ha! Ha! I went and looked in the mirror to see if I was alright. He must have got pretty tired carrying it. There was another party of two chaps and two girls in 1937. Then at Easter there was about 14 of them with girls and ropes – from Sydney ... next day we were mustering. We couldn't find the cattle for days.

In October 1976, under advice from the National Trust of Australia, Kellion offered Kunderang to the NPWS. The property was recommended for inclusion on the Trust's Register of Historic Buildings after an inspection of its cedar homestead and outbuildings. The NPWS valuation followed in 1988. During this period East Kunderang was under either freehold (327.8 hectares) or perpetual crown lease (31 678 hectares). Parts of the area were originally gazetted as small reserves under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* 1974.



FIGURE 4.31 Picnic at Georges Creek, c 1922. The Kunderang ravines were an early focus for bushwalking and other 'eco-tourism' related activity. (Kidd family collection; courtesy University of New England Heritage Centre: P13550)

With plans made to develop surrounding areas, including the proposed damming of Apsley Gorge, the East Kunderang property was purchased and in 1989 proclaimed as the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. Parts of the East Kunderang pastoral station (excluding the homestead complex) have also been gazetted as 'wilderness' under the state's *Wilderness Act* 1987.

CONCLUSIONS

While I had started to research and document the histories of East Kunderang, I still hadn't found much to justify claims that this was one of the most important pastoral properties in the history of Aboriginal-settler relations in the Macleay Valley. What I found – and have sketched here – was a long history of white pastoral occupation and settlement in the Kunderang ravines. As with many histories that might be written to support the documentary analysis for a conservation management plan for such a place, I have concentrated here on land tenure and the history of the built environment at Kunderang. In doing so, I have missed what, for the woman with whose recollections I began this chapter, as well as many other Aboriginal people, is an integral aspect of the history of this place – Aboriginal people's contributions of labour and subsequent attachment to the Kunderang landscape. This book now turns to the somewhat less obvious Aboriginal history of Kunderang station, before later detailing the relationships that former pastoral workers and their families have formed with the landscape of the Kunderang ravines through pastoral work.



FIGURE 4.32 A group of bushwalkers who had walked down to the East Kunderang Homestead from Uralla, late 1940s. (Fitzgerald/McDonell Family Albums, DEC)

CHAPTER 5

Hidden heritage: Aboriginal people in the pastoral industry

This chapter returns to the profound significance of Kunderang to the Aboriginal communities at Kempsey, Walcha, Armidale and Bellbrook. In Chapter 4, I undertook a conservative recounting of the land tenure and built history of Kunderang East pastoral station. This is not dissimilar to what might appear in obligatory Conservation Management Plans produced by agencies to guide their management of the significance of such a place.

What is missing from this analysis, however, is any information which might explain why Aboriginal people have such a deep and fundamental attachment to Kunderang as a place associated with their ancestors. In this chapter, I discuss the hidden histories of Aboriginal people at Kunderang East as a way of coming to understand how Kunderang pastoral station developed into an iconic place for the Aboriginal community.

When I began researching the secondary and primary documentary sources for the history of Kunderang, there were only two which stood out as illuminating some of the details around why Kunderang should be considered such an iconic place by the local Aboriginal community. The first of these was Bill Cohen's autobiography, which includes many details about his employment, along with other Aboriginal people, at Kunderang over much of the twentieth century. The second major source were oral accounts of former Aboriginal workers on Kunderang and their families. I use these two sources here as a starting point for exploring the dense and diverse historical significance of the Kunderang Gorges to Dhan-gadi and Gumbaingir Aboriginal people today.

'TO MY DELIGHT': MEMORIES OF A 'GRANDSON OF THE GUMBANGARRI'

To My Delight: The Autobiography of Bill Cohen, a Grandson of the Gumbangarri (Cohen 1987) is a remarkable record of one Aboriginal man who worked at East Kunderang on and off for much of his life. His father, Jack Cohen, had worked at nearby Wongwabinda as early as 1889, and on Kunderang with his sons throughout the early part of the twentieth century. Three generations of Cohens worked at Kunderang, and most of the Aboriginal people who discussed their attachments to Kunderang as part of this project are related to Jack Cohen in one way or another. In this context, Cohen's autobiography provides, in addition to an insight into the history of Kunderang, a very personal look into the life history of one Aboriginal man from the Macleay valley during the greater part of the twentieth century (this section after Cole 2001).

Bill, his sisters and brothers were born and lived at Wongwabinda, the station on which their father had been employed since the early 1910s and then owned by the Wright family. As a child, Bill remembered seeing other Aboriginal family members living on various pastoral stations in northern New South Wales. In contrast, 20 years later, Bill stayed on Kunderang station for two- or three-month stretches during working seasons, while his wife and children lived on the Bellbrook Aboriginal Reserve. His story also begins to hint at the general absence of Aboriginal people from the documentary record at Kunderang by revealing the way in which, by the mid-twentieth century, Aboriginal people had become increasingly institutionalised and segregated on Aborigines Protection Board reserves such as Bellbrook.

Bill Cohen travelled widely throughout his life. His first working experience was a droving trip to Queensland at the age of 14, during which he acted as a milkboy and groom. He accompanied his father on this trip and returned to New South Wales on another droving journey the following year. He went back to Kunderang, but left after a short period because of ‘prejudice’, then travelled widely from Burnt Bridge mission to Walcha and Tamworth, before ending up in Melbourne working as a boxer. He later returned again to Kunderang, where his father initiated him at a Dhan-gadi initiation site on the tableland – Bill having run away from what he recalls as the ‘last initiation’ on Bellbrook in 1934 (see Creamer 1977). This time Bill stayed to work on Kunderang, and he married Esther Kelly at Bellbrook Aboriginal Reserve. Although Bill and Esther moved to Georges Creek, where his uncle and aunt, and the Dunn and Naylor families lived, the couple later returned to Bellbrook Reserve where their two sons and a daughter were born.

Bill was employed at odd times for many years on Kunderang station. When there was no work at Kunderang he would live at Bellbrook Reserve, working as a lantana grubber (removing roots) and trapping rabbits. He also used his hunting skills and knowledge to kill dingos, for which he was paid per scalp. Rations at Bellbrook were withdrawn if it appeared residents were not looking for work, so Bill spent much of his time doing unskilled labouring, despite his talents as a stockman and drover.

Bill described his dream to follow in his father’s footsteps and work for the Wrights, on whose stations he had grown up as a boy: ‘Maurice Wright, his sister Tina were my childhood playmates and the Wrights kept Dad in work as a stockman and drover. Even today Dad is still with the Wrights at Long Flat, owned by Cecil Wright of Dyamberin’ (Cohen 1987: 82). One of the significant points here is that the Wrights supplied his father with regular employment – they ‘kept Dad in work’ – which was a marked difference to the on-again, off-again conditions Bill experienced at Kunderang and elsewhere.

Eventually Bill attained the status of head stockman at Kunderang, a position that he expressed great pride in. His first act was to take a ride around the boundaries, camping at various places and fishing. In this way, he claimed the country as his, if only momentarily: ‘The following night, Top Yard. Then lifting up Black Camp Spur, on out to the Front Tablelands. Of course I had 2 dozen boxes of matches and didn’t I let the neighbours know there was a firebug in the area!’ (Cohen 1987: 103).

In 1939, Bill Cohen joined the army and was posted to the Gulf of Carpentaria. He returned to work at a number of local pastoral stations, including Towel Creek in the middle reaches of the Macleay. Key places in Bill’s life include North Hill Common, an unsupervised Aboriginal camp near Armidale; the camp at Georges Creek; Armidale Reserve; Bellbrook; and the camp at Lower Creek. Other places he visited or travelled to include Greenhills and Burnt Bridge reserves in Kempsey, Purfleet Aboriginal Reserve, La Perouse Aboriginal Reserve in Sydney, Walcha Aboriginal Reserve and Melbourne. Pastoral stations he worked at or lived on as a child and adult included Kunderang Station, Pee Dee Station, Kindon Station (in Queensland), Dyamberin, and Towel Creek.

FIGURE 5.1 Detail of 1919–1931 Kunderang wages book, showing wages paid to Paddy Doureaux, an Aboriginal man from Bellbrook, during the years 1922 and 1923. (University of New England Heritage Centre)

WAGES BOOKS

Having established this connection between Aboriginal people and pastoral labour at Kunderang, I wanted to explore how common the picture painted by Bill Cohen was for other Aboriginal people on the Macleay, and how long this situation had existed. One source of such information are wages and stores books, which record details of wages paid and rations given to pastoral labourers. An analysis of the wages and stores books associated with East Kunderang shows that Aboriginal labour was used discontinuously throughout the period of operations of the station.

Books exist in the University of New England Heritage Centre for the periods 1855–1862 (day books for Moona Plains and Kunderang), 1865–1870 (stores issue book, Kunderang), 1892–1922 (ration book, incomplete, Moona Plains), 1919–1931 (wages book, Kunderang), and 1931–1947 (wages and stores, Kunderang). While many of the books are only partially complete or legible, and thus form a discontinuous series, they provide a richly detailed source of the working lives of stockmen and women on Kunderang over its almost 100 years of operation. When read in conjunction with oral histories collected from the former pastoral workers and their descendants, it is possible to gain an insight into the working lives of the Aboriginal people who worked at Kunderang station.

In consultation with relevant Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people from Armidale, Bellbrook and Kempsey, I compiled a list of family names of Aboriginal people that undertook pastoral work in the area. This list was checked against the wages books to document the presence of Aboriginal labourers on Kunderang station over the period 1855 to 1947.

1855–1862 DAY BOOK (MOONA PLAINS AND KUNDERANG)

The day book records all stores purchased for Kunderang and Moona Plains, but no employment records. Interestingly, there is a single reference to a purchase of one knife and one shirt for ‘Black Billey’ on 17 November 1855, which might suggest an Aboriginal person in the employ or in close association with the Crawfords. This is a tantalising suggestion which accords well with historical records that document the wide adoption of Aboriginal pastoral labourers by 1851 (see further discussion below).

1865–1870 STORES BOOK (MOONA PLAINS AND KUNDERANG)

None of the names in this stores book appear to be family names of Aboriginal people who have lived in Bellbrook over the last 80 years. Rations listed include blankets, pipes,

Date	Description	Amount
1922	Aug. 21 st commenced work 20/ 0/ 0	
Sept. 7 th	Cheque for amount due 4/ 10/ 0	
30 th	Cheque for amount due 4/ 10/ 0	
Oct. 14 th	20/ 0/ 0	
23 rd	Cheque for 10/ 0/ 0	
28 th	Cheque for 10/ 0/ 0	
Nov. 20 th	Cheque for 10/ 0/ 0	
Dec. 4 th	Cheque for 10/ 0/ 0	
16 th	Cheque for 10/ 0/ 0	
16 th	Cheque for 10/ 0/ 0	
23 rd	Cheque for 10/ 0/ 0	
1923	Jan. 30 th 1 ckt tobacco 2/ 6	
Feb. 3 rd	4 weeks wages 5/ 11/ 6	
4 th	1 Sunday worked 1/ 0/ 0	
5 th	1 share in profits 3/ 0/ 0	
Mar. 3 rd	Cheque for 10/ 0/ 0	
26 th	Cheque on account 4/ 0/ 0	
30 th	Cheque on account 2/ 0/ 0	
Apr. 6 th	20/ 0/ 0	
Apr. 21 st	Wages in full 11/ 10/ 0	

tobacco, bottles of ink, matches, valise and stamps, knife, socks and moleskins. It is possible that some itinerant Aboriginal labourers or Aboriginal people who are part of grubbing or fencing teams are not listed separately in this stores book, being listed under the name of their contractor. The work done by particular people is not listed, however some are paid per annum while others on a weekly rate – suggesting the long-term employment of a few station hands, with the seasonal employment of stockmen at mustering time. Those paid per annum appear to have relatively continuous periods of work from year to year.

1884–1892 WAGES AND ACCOUNTS (MOONA PLAINS)

Although parts of this book are illegible, once again, none of them appear to be family names of Aboriginal people who have lived in Bellbrook over the last 80 years.

1892–1922 RATION BOOK (MOONA PLAINS)

This book is incomplete and in places illegible, but what is interesting about it is that it lists the issue of rations to 'Indians' in 1902, and to 'Alick Thompson, Blackfellow' in 1903. This suggests that there were people who were receiving rations for work over this period. In both cases payment of some cash is also listed for work. A corresponding rations book from the period before this is not available, and it remains possible that the absence of Aboriginal people's names from the 1884–1892 series is because their pay was listed in a separate ration book. This reference is, however, the earliest definite entry which lists Aboriginal workers on either Moona Plains or Kunderang stations.

1919–1931 WAGES BOOK

Of the 142 names from the 1919–1931 wages book, at least 56 are the family names of Aboriginal people from Armidale, Georges Creek or Bellbrook. The work listed includes suckering, grubbing and ringing (clearing), rabbiting and payment for dingo scalps and fencing. Mustering and station-hand work do not appear to be listed separately. Some men are listed with their wives, or both as a 'married couple', suggesting either the involvement of both husband and wife in the work, or the wife's involvement in domestic duties on the station. In general, some Aboriginal people appear to have more consistent year-round work than non-Aboriginal people in this wages book.

1931–1947 WAGES AND STORES BOOK

At least 22 of a total of 31 names from the 1931–1947 wages book are the family names of Aboriginal people from Armidale, Georges Creek or Bellbrook. Work is not listed individually, with the exception of 'J Widders, Sept 1938 for shearing sheep £1 6 2'. After 1931, workers are no longer listed with their wives or as a 'married couple', suggesting a possible cessation of domestic assistance or an alteration of record-keeping methods at this time. Once again, some Aboriginal people appear to have more consistent year-round work than non-Aboriginal people in this wages book.

SUMMARY OF THE WAGES RECORDS

From this limited analysis of the Moona Plains and Kunderang wages records, it appears Aboriginal people found more employment on Kunderang during the twentieth century, and by the inter-war period there were more Aboriginal people than non-Aboriginal people working on Kunderang station. Many of these men and women came from settlements and reserves like Georges Creek and Bellbrook. The lack of evidence of Aboriginal people working on the property prior to this is puzzling. By contrast, Jack Cohen started work on Wongwabinda in 1889 (Wright 1985: 116).

There are several explanations that might reveal this apparent pattern. It is possible that Aboriginal men were working in land clearing or grubbing teams with a European contractor whose name appears in the wages records. There is also some suggestion – although unsubstantiated – of at least one Aboriginal man ('Black Billy') working on Moona Plains in 1855. Nonetheless, while there is evidence for some Aboriginal people working on pastoral properties in the area from as early as 1855, it appears that there was a radical increase in the availability of pastoral labour to Aboriginal people sometime after the turn of the century. These labour patterns require further exploration, in particular with reference to Barry Morris's work at Bellbrook (1983; 1986; 1989; see also Creamer 1977) which documents the history of Dhan-gadi people's labour relations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

ABORIGINAL CAMPS AND RESERVES ON THE MACLEAY

Between 1883 and 1908, sixteen Aboriginal reserves were established in the Macleay and Bellinger River valleys (Morris 1989). The earliest of these were Stuart's Island Reserve, near the mouth of the Nambucca River, and a reserve on the Macleay River at Arakoon – both gazetted in 1883. Other reserves were established at South-West Rocks, Kempsey, Macksville, Bowraville, Nambucca Heads and Bellbrook. Later, during the 1930s, Burnt Bridge Reserve was gazetted.

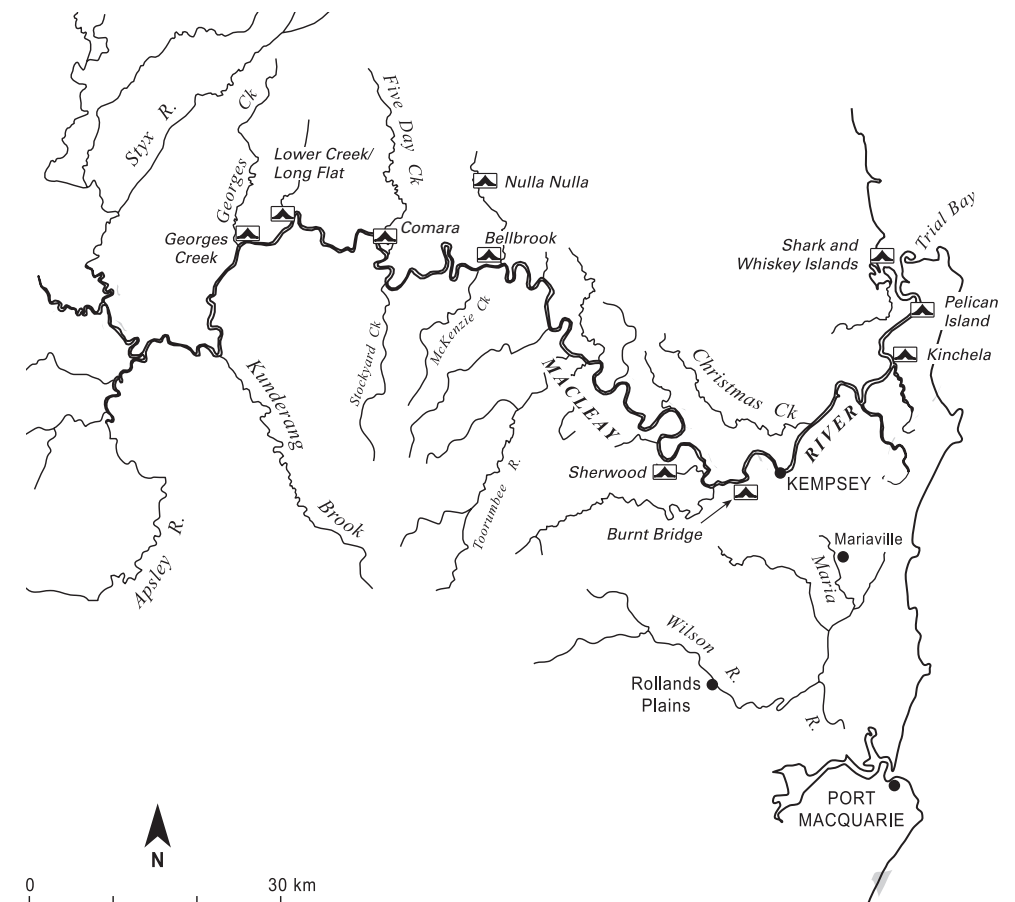


FIGURE 5.2 Aboriginal missions and post-contact camping places on the Macleay River, c 1880–1930.

There were three major Aboriginal camps on the upper Macleay in the early twentieth century. The spatial distribution of these camps, argues Morris, corresponded to the labour requirements of the European economy. Camps were located at Bellbrook, Lower Creek and Georges Creek. Morris (1983) records a number of Aboriginal families living in these camps semi-permanently, and a reciprocal relationship developing between the European pastoral property owners and a number of Aboriginal men and their dependants. Food, that is rations, and shelter were generally exchanged for a stable pool of skilled labour. Morris (1983; 1989) also notes several later historical changes that affected employment opportunities for Aboriginal people on the Macleay.

CHANGES IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT OF THE MACLEAY: c1900

The introduction of dairying in the lower Macleay in the 1890s altered the working environment for Aboriginal people. Prior to this, Aboriginal people competed with small (white) landholders on the lower Macleay for seasonal pastoral work like cattle mustering, fencing, land clearing and fur trapping. However, dairying, and the establishment of a butter factory near Kempsey in 1906, meant that small landholders on the lower Macleay could earn a monthly return for milk (instead of a yearly return for a single crop of maize) and diversify by growing maize and keeping dairy cows and pigs. So the white settlers did not need or want the irregular work from the pastoral stations. This produced a working environment that was more conducive to Aboriginal employment in the early twentieth century. Morris's first phase of employment dates from around this time, and is consistent with the wages records from Kunderang and Moona Plains, that show very few Aboriginal people employed before the turn of the century.

At Lower Creek, Aboriginal labour was used exclusively on pastoral properties either in clearing land or stock work. When men had work some distance from the camps, the whole family moved, and the women set up a new family camp near the work sites (Morris 1989). As a number of families were usually involved in the work sites, this work pattern shared features with pre-contact economic and social life. The seasonally intensive work of the cattle industry enabled large numbers of people to congregate for long periods of up to three months.

The essential elements of mobility remained an integral part of Aboriginal life while it coincided with the interests of the European economy. Bush tucker remained an important part of the diet, and was supplemented by European goods such as tea, flour and sugar. This pattern of working life is consistent with the Kunderang wages records from 1919–1937, which indicate that both stockmen and their wives were paid for labour on the station.

GEORGES CREEK

While Bellbrook and the camp at Lower Creek were largely populated by Dhan-gadi Aboriginal people, Morris believes that the community at Georges Creek was established by Gumbaingir people from Grafton. From 1900 to 1930, this community provided the main labour force for Kunderang and several surrounding stations, but with the closure of the Georges Creek school in 1930, many Aboriginal people shifted to Bellbrook. However, the relationship with the settlement continued (Morris 1983: 505), as several older people stayed at Georges Creek, and this formed the nucleus of a community 'holiday camp', where children and wives of Kunderang's Aboriginal workers would stay during the school holidays.

This function as a 'holiday camp' is what Aboriginal people from Armidale, Bellbrook and Kempsey remember today about the Georges Creek encampment. Christine Kim, daughter of George Cohen (Jack Cohen's son), explains:



FIGURE 5.3 G Booth, 'Aboriginal Camp, Upper Macleay River', c 1920. This photograph shows a group of Aboriginal people camping at Georges Creek. Two of the men in this photograph also appear in photographs working on East Kunderang. (Courtesy University of New England Heritage Centre: HRCPO470)

We spent most of our holidays there. My Aunt Nellie Kelly, she was a Cohen, her Uncle Dan Hilton and Grandfather's sister Grace reared her up when our mother died. She spent all of her childhood there and she used to take us up for the holidays ... Dad would come down and have a couple of nights with us there, at Georges Creek, and then go back up to Kunderang ... my brothers they just went straight to Kunderang as soon as we got there ... they used to go mustering and droving with Dad (interview, 20 March 2001).

The start of compulsory schooling and its post-1911 enforcement by the Aborigines Protection Board was another factor that changed this working pattern (Morris 1989; Cohen 1987). Women and children tended to stay at Bellbrook Reserve where a segregated school was located. As a consequence, Aboriginal men and their older sons spent more time working away from their families. In this context 'holiday camps' on the edges of pastoral properties, such as the one at Georges Creek, became an extremely significant part of the social landscape. During the school holidays, Aboriginal women and children could travel to meet their husbands, fathers, grandfathers, uncles and brothers who were working on the stations, whilst enjoying their time away from the surveillance of the mission managers.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OF THE MACLEAY IN THE 1830s

The changes brought about by the invasion of the Macleay transformed the social world of the Aboriginal people who had previously called the valley their home. At the time of first European invasion, the Macleay River valley, from the steep and rugged tablelands and valleys to the west, downriver to the more humid and temperate coast, was inhabited by Dhan-gadi Aboriginal language speakers (Henderson 1851; Ryan 1964; Tindale 1974; Cohen 1987). This language group was composed of at least eight different dialect groups, of which two – the Nulla-Nulla and Conderang – occupied the upper reaches and gorge system of the Macleay (Godwin 1985). Hodgkinson describes each dialect group as composed of 80–100 men and women excluding children, and estimates the population of



FIGURE 5.4 Clement Hodgkinson, 'Kangaroo at bay', c 1843, from an engraving bound with the original in *Australia from Port Macquarie to Moreton Bay*. (Courtesy National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an6617605)

the valley during the 1830s at 660 to 800 adults (1845: 222). Godwin (1990) suggests this is an underestimate due to the decimation of the population by the smallpox epidemic of 1829–1831, and should be revised up by 40 per cent or more to account for this.

These dialect groups split up into smaller groups during particular times of the year, and re-joined to undertake group ceremonies and meetings. While there is little evidence of coastal people moving into the gorge system, there is evidence that during summer there was a movement of people from the hinterlands to the tablelands. For example, McDonald, the Crown Commissioner of Lands, reports seeing Aboriginal people from the Macleay and the Clarence on the tablelands in March 1840 (CCL New England District, 1842, GD, vol 74). The patterns of movement along the Macleay become important in my discussion in the next chapter; however at this point it is important to keep the movement of people from along the river valley to the gorge hinterland in mind.

Henderson (1851) records many aspects of Aboriginal people's lives on the Macleay in the 1840s. Items of material culture used by Dhan-gadi people include coolamons for carrying water, ground-edged axes, and 3–4-metre hunting spears and shields. Hodgkinson describes the hunting of pademelons by Aboriginal people on the middle reaches of the Macleay:

This morning we crossed another of the Nambucca streams. As we entered the brush we heard the loud shouts of the blacks who were busily engaged in hunting. The plan adopted by the natives in this pursuit, was somewhat similar, on a small scale, to the mode of hunting pursued by some of the Indian princes. The blacks first of all dispersed, and formed in the brush a circle of a quarter of a mile in diameter, and then, on a given signal, they all commenced shouting and advancing towards the centre, gradually lessening the circle. The brush kangaroos or pademelons were thus gradually enclosed, and driven into a small space, where, being surrounded on all sides, they were dispatched by the natives, who carried for this purpose short cylindrical pieces of wood, formed from a species of tree growing in the brush, which is of greater specific gravity than any wood I am acquainted

with. This tribe was the same we had met a few days before, and to which the five blacks, who I had just dismissed, belonged. Apparently they had been performing a corroboree dance the preceding evening, as their bodies still preserved the traces of pigments with which they adorn themselves for that occasion. Among these blacks were several old men with beards ... on emerging from the brush, we passed the encampment of these natives, where we saw a number of women and boys who seemed excessively alarmed by our appearance (1845: 45).

Possums were also hunted in the upper reaches of the Macleay, being either smoked or chopped out of trees with ground-edged axes. At dusk, eels were caught in the river using torches and clubs, and *cobras* (a mangrove worm) were chopped out of dead wood using stone axes. Kangaroos and other macropods were, in addition to the method discussed above, hunted using dogs, while *towwack* (a yam found on river flats and rainforest stands) was gathered by women. A soft purple fruit the size of an apple is also described, as is the leaching, pounding and roasting of the roots of the rainforest fern *Colonasis macrorhizza* (Campbell 1978).



FIGURE 5.5 Clement Hodgkinson, 'Natives spearing fish in the Bellengen [sic] River', c 1843, from an engraving bound with the original in *Australia from Port Macquarie to Moreton Bay*. (Courtesy National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an6617600)

Shelters were constructed from sheets of bark in times of wet weather. Sketches accompanying Hodgkinson's book (1845) show Aboriginal people in the lower Macleay using dug-out canoes and spearing fish with three- and four-pronged fishing spears, and groups of Aboriginal people engaged in mock warfare carrying shields and clubs. (See Chapter 6 for further discussion of Aboriginal archaeology and ethnohistory on the Macleay before 1840.)

WORKING LIVES

By 1851, as in other parts of New South Wales (see Chapter 2), many Aboriginal people began to find work in the area in response to the shortage of white men caused by the widespread migration to the goldfields. In 1853, Commissioner for Crown Lands



FIGURE 5.6 Charles Kerry, 'Aboriginals, Upper Macleay River', c 1880. This appears to have been taken near Georges Creek in 1880, and shows a group of more than 20 Aboriginal people in what appears to be a 'natural' pose. The men carry boomerangs, throwing clubs and spears, while one of the women holds a digging stick. (Courtesy La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria: H20918143 LTA623)

Merewether wrote of the demand for Aboriginal labour in the region being:

caused by the withdrawal of the whole of the labouring population to the different goldfields ... The services of the natives have been indispensable. Indeed but for their presence most of the ordinary operations of the district would have been at a standstill and scarcely a single settler or squatter on the River is there, who has not had one or more in his employment under a written agreement at wages varying according to their degrees of usefulness and intelligence, from 30s[hillings] to 15 pounds per annum (CCL Macleay River District to CC, 6 Feb 1853, GD vol. 74).

There are no personal records from Kunderang station to describe its earliest period of operation. However, the records of Annie Baxter, the wife of a lieutenant who worked in New South Wales in the 1830s, vividly depict early pastoralism in the Macleay river region. At the time of her death, Baxter left a journal of 32 volumes covering the years 1834–1868. These record five voyages between England and the Australia, and tell the story of squatters in the Macleay River valley as well as in the Port Fairy and Western districts of Victoria. While there are only fleeting discussions of relationships with Aboriginal people, her journal does reveal the close and comfortable relationship she enjoyed with two Aboriginal men who worked as station hands on the property 'Yessaba', where she lived with her husband John Baxter in 1840–1841. Her diary entries show the co-operation between squatters and Aboriginal groups: 'On the 20th April the first crop of corn was ready to pull at Yesabba, Baxter went over to the blacks camp for people to husk it' (Frost 1992).

FIGURE 5.7 A group of Aboriginal people outside an unnamed pastoral property in the New England granite country, c 1860. By this time many Aboriginal people had begun to find work in the pastoral industry in the area. (Courtesy University of New England Heritage Centre: HRC1093)



This period of the beginning of employment for Aboriginal people occurred slightly earlier on the tablelands, where in 1843 G J McDonald, Commissioner of Crown Lands for the New England district, reported that few stations in the district did not have one or two Aborigines constantly 'on the establishment' (CCL New England district, 1843, GD, vol 74). In 1844 he wrote of:

the diminution of hostile feeling and outrage on the part of the Shepherds and Stockmen towards the Native Tribes – and the comparative cessation of the attacks of the Aborigines on the life and prosperity of the Europeans – a marked and undeniable improvement was everywhere apparent ... with the exception of spearing some stray cattle on stations situated near the Eastern Falls of the Table Lands ... In other respects I regret to state that there is but little indication of any change for the better ... in the moral or social condition of this nomadic people ... except that probably a few more individuals have become attached to the Establishments of the Licensed locations of the Crown Lands as House Servants, Stockmen and Shepherds – a mode of employing them which I take every opportunity of encouraging and increasing (CCL New England district, 1844, GD, vol 74)

BELLBROOK 'MISSION'

Within this larger social and economic landscape, Bellbrook 'mission' – which was originally established as an unsupervised reserve and later managed by Aborigines Protection Board officials – took on particular importance. Unlike some other parts of New South Wales (see Chapter 8), where Aboriginal people tended to live in large encampments on the margins of the pastoral properties on which they worked, the fact that most of the Aboriginal men and women who worked on Kunderang lived on the reserves at Bellbrook or Georges Creek begins to make their absence from Kunderang's documentary record make more sense.

Four Aboriginal farms, each run by different families, were established at the Bellbrook Reserve by the early part of the century (Morris 1989; Quinlan 1983). The farms were 3 acres in size and all grew maize for the city markets (*Australian Aborigines Advocate*, 'Report from Bellbrook', 1911: 14). However, during the economic depression of the 1930s, Bellbrook Reserve was used by the Aborigines Protection Board as a site for concentration and surveillance of local Aboriginal people (Goodall 1996; Morris 1989). As the possibilities for self-managed farms were shut down, pastoral properties such as East Kunderang provided steady employment for Bellbrook people.

BELLBROOK STATION REPORTS AND RETURNS: 1946–1948

Managers from the Aborigines Welfare Board filled out the station reports and returns which recorded details about people's movements on and off the missions, what work was available, and who was employed as the station's 'handyman'. The reports also recorded the matron's regular weekly 'inspections' of residents' homes. This intrusive level of surveillance and interference in Aboriginal lives is documented in the reports and returns. While many reports were destroyed by fire, a surviving set of reports from the late 1940s gives a vivid

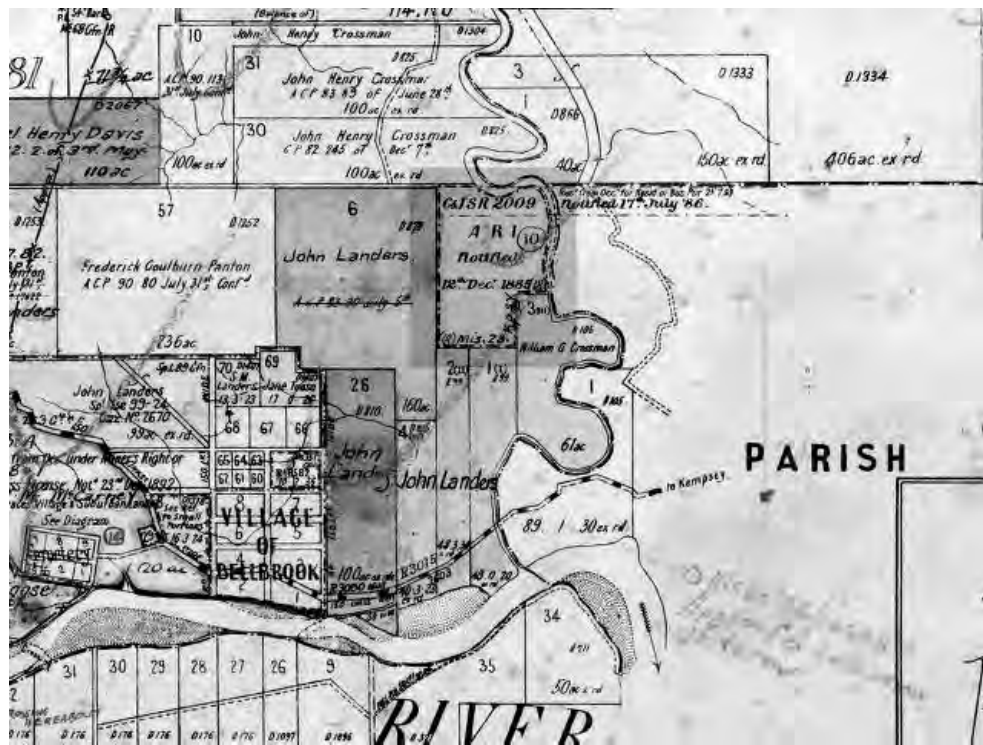


FIGURE 5.8 Extract from 'County Dudley, Parish of Nulla Nulla, edition 2, dated 1901, showing AR 1, Bellbrook Reserve. (Land Information Centre digital photograph from a SRNSW map; courtesy the Department of Lands)

account of Aboriginal people's lives at Bellbrook. The manager's report reveals that his position had another dimension – to act as an employment agent for Aboriginal men and women on the Aboriginal station. Bill Cohen (1987) describes the arrangement and the time he was told, along with eight other Aboriginal men at Bellbrook, to perform grubbing work for a 'nigger-driver'. This was a time when there was no minimum wage for Aboriginal workers.

In 1946, Bellbrook comprised 96 acres – 15 acres being suitable for cultivation and 81 for grazing. At this time, Bellbrook averaged 100 residents, but there were large population fluctuations due to the availability of seasonal work. The manager, G Kennedy, reported in December 1946 on produce grown in the community garden and farm to supply their residents: it included corn, watermelons, 1 acre of potatoes, pumpkin, squash, spinach, tomatoes, carrots and beans. There were eight milking cows in December 1947, producing 4 gallons of milk a day, and milk was distributed to station residents.

In December 1947, work available off the station included bean picking, banana plantation work, dairy farm, and contract cattle station work and domestic duties. Meanwhile on Bellbrook, 3 acres were under cultivation growing lucerne, cabbages, beet, cauliflowers, barley, broad beans, pumpkin, spinach and corn. Work performed on the station for rations included 'gardening' and 'sanitary services'.

Bill Cohen's name appears in the Bellbrook worksheets that detail the name and work given to men on the station. He was allocated chopping back blackberries and demolishing old houses on the station. During 1946 and 1947 he was employed in farm work such as working on gravel, chopping thistles, planting pumpkins and rockmelons, chopping out scotch thistles, plowing and harrowing, fencing and chipping around corn, weeding carrots, transplanting lettuce and planting beans. In June 1948, the station was flooded and its

community garden – of cabbages, cauliflowers, silver beet and peas – washed away and was subsequently re-established.

Work on the station in August 1948 included 'clearing and burning of long overgrowth around fences', 'doors made and open shed enclosed', 'floor made of stones', 'harness rack made and shadow board for garden tools', 'work bench constructed', 'shelves for nails, utensils, pipe fittings', 'clearance of weeds at vegetable plot', 'barn repaired and farm implements housed therein together with fertilisers etc which were moved from garage'. Other tasks listed included 'pump house cleared of rubbish and housed down', 'garage cleaned, hosed and disinfected, portion partitioned off and utilised as treatment room', 'construction of new sanitary depot commenced', 'tools cleaned and repaired, and repairs to harness with materials and equipment available', 'maintenance work on pump and truck' and 'endeavoured to plough area to plant corn but station horses were not suitable and the work was discontinued'. These entries provide an insight into the nature of the labour performed by Aboriginal people on missions and supervised reserves during the middle part of the twentieth century.

SUPERVISION AND SURVEILLANCE

Bellbrook was a place where Aboriginal people came under intense government surveillance. Christine Kim recalls the matron's inspections of people's homes on the mission:

Christine Kim: She did this inspection at least once a week but sometimes she'd sneak in and see if she could catch you. If she got set on a person she would sneak back into the house.

DJ: And what if there was dirt? Or if it wasn't up to her standards?

CK: Well, she would want to send the kids to a home ... we were nearly taken out ourselves when my mother died. They had to put us in the sulky, myself and my three brothers ... they took us over to Taylor's Arm at night, and uncle Ron Kelly, to dodge the welfare (interview, 20 March 2001).

Methods of surveillance included obliging people to sign in and out of the mission, and making Aboriginal men work away from the mission during the week under threat of not receiving their rations. This situation created a space where women were vulnerable to authoritative control and the threat of sexual exploitation:

It was 'no work, no rations' ... there was a gate there and you had to sort of report when you came into the mission and again when you went off the mission ... when you haven't got a mother and your father was away all the time, we were really scared (Christine Kim interview, 20 March 2001).

HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS

Despite negative occurrences, for those Aboriginal people currently resident in Armidale, Bellbrook and Kempsey, the reserve at Bellbrook, Kunderang and Georges Creek are understood to be significant, interconnected places in their history. Due to its geographic isolation and the 'low-density' nature of its industry, Kunderang was heavily dependent on Aboriginal labour, both for farm work and domestic labour. As a measure of the inter-relationship between the two places, 'feral horses' bred wild at Kunderang were rounded up and taken down for the use of residents at Bellbrook. During times of impoverishment of Aboriginal stations and reserves, Bellbrook remains unusual for the large number of horses that were owned by station residents. It is impossible to understand Aboriginal people's working lives in this area without an understanding of Bellbrook's role in concentrating and centralising Aboriginal people on the Macleay as a pastoral labour reserve (Morris 1989: 33).



FIGURE 5.9 (left) Branding at the homestead yards: (l-r) Dan Hilton, George Widders, Alec McDonell and Henry Dunn. (Fitzgerald/McDonell Family Albums, DEC)



FIGURE 5.10 (right) Branding at the Left Hand yards: (l-r) Alec McDonell, George Widders, Henry Dunn and Dan Hilton. (Fitzgerald/McDonell Family Albums, DEC)

Chris Sullivan (1989) noted that Alec McDonell relied almost entirely on Aboriginal stockmen (see also Wright 1985), and the station itself used predominantly Aboriginal labour until the 1960s. In addition to evidence from the wages records, a series of photographs taken by Alec McDonell from about 1940–1950, and unlike those family photographs of the Fitzgerald period, features pastoral labour at Kunderang. In doing so, the role of Aboriginal people at work in the yards, mustering and branding cattle, has been recorded.

ORAL HISTORIES

This rich and vivid photographic collection which documents aspects of the working lives of Aboriginal people on the Macleay is supplemented by stories from Aboriginal people who lived and worked in the Macleay and are now resident in Armidale, Bellbrook or Kempsey. Their recollections form a body of oral literature that documents a long history of work and associations with the country around the Kunderang Gorges.

BEGINNINGS

Barry Cohen was born at Bellbrook and while a young man in the 1940s and 1950s he worked at Kunderang with his father George Cohen, uncle Bill Cohen and his cousin Tommy Davison. Barry recalls: 'I used to go up there on my holidays with my cousin Tommy Davison. He used to take me up for holidays, so as soon as I left school I went straight up there. I left school at 14' (interview, 21 March 2001).

Barry was employed mainly doing stock work, although he remembers fencing on one occasion. During the muster, he said that there would be up to nine people working at once:

That's when the full muster was on. When we finished a muster they only had two of us or three of us stay there all the time ... [on one occasion] we got caught when it was raining. When we started off from Kunderang we used to take it [the mob of cattle] up to a place called Moona Plains. Well the boss that used to own Kunderang, his sister married the fella that owned Moona Plains and we used to camp there and they used to take the cattle on to Gloucester and Barrington Tops. It used to take us a fortnight but we got caught there once when there was a big flood ... so we stayed there for three days, we were running out of tucker. We only used to take so much tucker because we were only gone from Kunderang to Happy Land or Moona Plains ... we stayed there and had to leave the cattle in the yard for three days (interview, 21 March 2001).



FIGURE 5.11 (left) Mustering camp, possibly at Rusdens Creek with Dan Hilton at right. (Fitzgerald/McDonell Family Albums, DEC)



FIGURE 5.12 (right) Aboriginal stockman at Reedy Creek Flat. (Fitzgerald/McDonell Family Albums, DEC)

Like his cousin Barry, Mervyn Cohen was also introduced to work on Kunderang by Tommy Davison as a teenager:

Well I guess when I first worked up there me and another bloke, a cousin of mine, we were carrying our swag from Armidale. We tried to get a ride coming down to the Silver Mine there and nobody would give us a lift. So we walked down to Georges Creek and there was a bloke there, he was a cousin of mine too, Tommy Davison, he was out there collecting mail. So he said he'd take us up to spend a weekend at Kunderang and there was a couple of horses there at Georges Creek – [aside] that's where Alex used to live, at George's – and he happened to be away at that time and he gave us a couple of horses and we rode in there with Tommy and spent a couple of days in there and I guess that's where it sort of kicked off (interview, 17 May 2001).

MUSTERING

Mervyn Cohen recalls the difficulties involved in mustering wild cattle:

You only get one chance with wild cattle, alright. So you've got to be on the ball. You've got to know which way they're going to run. You can't hold them on a hill. You've got to let them run down into the creek, so you've got to have a couple of blokes up in the front. I always had to be up the front with one of the other blokes, and there would be a couple of other blokes on the wing, and you'd do it that way. Once you'd get them off and going down hill you could handle them. They'd follow you around but if they got a fright or anything it'd take a bit of holding (interview, 17 May 2001).

In the early years they stayed in a little Aboriginal stockmen's hut on Kunderang, although after Thelma moved down to Georges Creek, they used to camp in the homestead with Alec. Bruce Lockwood remembers staying in the hut as a young man of 17 or 18 years old:

They had this one room where they had an old stove in there and their bed and their dining room or whatever you like to call it, that's where they had to live ... It wasn't very big. You had to go out and wash your face in a dish out on the little tiny verandah. When it was raining and you couldn't move about near you, we were all under this little tiny shed (interview, 21 March 2001).

To calm the wild cattle, 'coachers', or tame cattle, used to be mustered into the mob. Their presence would quieten the wild cattle and make them easier to control:

You bring the coacher along into the wild cattle. You come along real slow with the coachers and then they bring the wild cattle back. You've got to keep 'em in the mob until

you get back to the yards. I remember once where these wild young bulls were fighting on this flat and I brought the coachers along and when they saw these other cattle down there they ran down where the wild bulls were and they knew that there was something wrong. The wild bulls came through the cows smelling like this, smelling through [snorts loudly throwing head back] and when they come out the other end they saw me and their heads went up like this, and one of them started to come rushing towards me (Bruce Lockwood interview, 21 March 2001).

Working days were long, from 4 or 5 am and going on into the night. The mustering team would take away a small amount of food and water, establishing camps along the way, then mustering up and down the creeks and the river looking for cattle.

ABORIGINAL WOMEN AT KUNDERANG

The Fitzgerald family manuscripts record that from the late 1800s Aboriginal women worked as nannies, informal nurses and midwives, and as domestic labourers at the Kunderang homestead (Fitzgerald papers, cited in Sullivan 1989). The establishment of the East Kunderang homestead in the late 1800s – when the place first became owner-occupied – coincided with the continuation of Aboriginal seasonal movements going between the winter cold of the gorges to the warmer coastal hinterland areas (see Chapter 6). By the early 1900s, this path was used by Aborigines travelling between the cold climate of Walcha Reserve to the warmer region of Bellbrook. This long trek was punctuated by stopping at the site of the East Kunderang homestead. The papers of Addie Fitzgerald, cited by Chris Sullivan, record the excitement felt by the children when ‘tribes’ passed through their station, and camped on Kunderang on their way to and from Walcha to Bellbrook:

Although mother did not approve, we somehow made our way to the camp, usually placed fairly close, and enjoyed the experience. As I remember it was not unlike a picture to our untried hearts ... The menu was prepared, always a meal of damper, baked of course in the fresh hot ashes, fish from the Macleay and fresh water. Rations of mutton or beef were given at the station. These meals were an interchange with much fun by the youngsters, but the parents were not so agreeable to the play (Addie Fitzgerald, cited in Sullivan 1989:102).

These groups camped a night or two near Kunderang station, ‘sufficient to get a supply of provisions to complete the journey ... rations of mutton or beef were given at the station’. This well-worn path between Walcha and Bellbrook created opportunities for familiarity and continued associations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women during this period. One Aboriginal women named Adeline is recorded to have formed a close association with Katherine Fitzgerald at this time:

Adeline was a native and very good to my mother, time and again she passed Kunderang on her way, on her long trek from the New England in the cold of Winter to the reserve at Bellbrook on the Macleay River. On these occasions Mother used to ask of her some service, mostly washing and at times cleaning, for she was a very reliable hand and thus she got to know the home well ... [once] Mother was ill in bed and she had a trained nurse in attendance ... Adeline was on her high horse as when she had asked to see Mother the nurse had refused. Her spirit could not take it, she replied ‘No, I am used to working for ladies’ ... the sequel was that the good soul knew the house and where Mother’s bedroom was. All went in to dinner, she sneaked around the side of the house to a window and asked Mother how she was (Fitzgerald papers, cited in Sullivan 1989:103).

Disruption to this seasonal cycle due to increasing government restrictions on Aboriginal lives through the administration of the Aborigines Protection Board (1901–1939) and Aborigines Welfare Board (1940–1969) ended this travelling pattern of women’s work.

Changes in women’s mobility were also precipitated by the introduction of compulsory schooling, as noted above.

Nevertheless various oral history sources record the involvement of Aboriginal women as stockworkers, ringbarkers and as domestic workers at Kunderang up until the 1940s. Ron Fitzgerald remembers that his father, as a young boy of six, would ‘get the coloured girls’ to help him put the rug on the stallion when he was left in charge of it by his father (cited in Sullivan 1989: 104). At this time, Jack Crawford, an Aboriginal stockman, lived permanently on the station with his wife and two children and it is likely Mrs Crawford worked in the homestead – although there is no documentary record of this. Significantly Alec McDonell notes that the station came to the end of its phase of family owner-occupation when his wife moved out of Kunderang homestead in the early 1950s – because she could no longer get domestic help.

CHANGES IN GENDERED SPACE

Even more significant was this final period when Kunderang became an exclusively masculine space, and the men and women of Bellbrook found themselves kept apart for many months of the year. Within this context, group events such as the local agricultural shows, and family gatherings during holiday times, took on added significance for the Aboriginal people of the Macleay:

In those days people would walk for miles and miles to the show. I worked at Comara there for a little while, babysitting and I know my uncles and aunties seen them walking up to the show in Armidale. One of my cousins, she’s here, said many times she walked from Bellbrook to Armidale. The show was one of the biggest things going. It was the only time we ever bought Dad new shoes and new clothes. They [Aboriginal people] came from everywhere. My brother Barry – we were all broke there one time – he rode this horse and he won and he really got big prize money for it. It’s a funny thing I was only talking about it a couple of weeks ago and his son didn’t even know this all happened, they were shocked (Christine Kim interview, 20 March 2001).

RACE, SPACE AND ‘PASSING’

Christine Kim particularly mentions the feelings of freedom she had when staying at the holiday camp at Georges Creek, and contrasts this experience with the restrictions placed on people at the mission, and the pervading racism of the surrounding towns: ‘It was freedom’.

Christine suffered taunts and criticism as an Aboriginal person with relatively fair skin. However, on some occasions this worked in her favour, allowing her to blend in with other non-Aboriginal people and subvert the racism of some of the local country towns. This racism was reflected by the segregation of public facilities such as swimming pools and cinemas, serving Aboriginal people separately, and the use of separate cutlery for Aborigines at cafes and restaurants.

I was 14 and when I went into the hospital at Kempsey, I was put into a ward with ‘normal’ children ... white children. And then after my [darker skinned] auntie and uncle visited me they put me into a little room down the back of the hospital, where they kept the Aboriginals. There was just three little rooms and a little verandah. One woman was having a baby there [in front of everyone in the room] ... it was shocking. Looking back, everything was marked with ‘AB’ on it. [But] I was the first black gin to get served a milkshake in a proper milkshake container. When we went to the movies with [white friends], I went to sit up the back with them. The Mackay girl and Lily Ballangarry [Aboriginal friends] really got in close with us. They wouldn’t let us sit at the back [because they had darker skin] so [when they were there] I had to go and sit up the front with them (interview, 20 March 2001).

Race is fundamental to the shared history of East Kunderang. The Aboriginal families who worked on Kunderang stayed because of their associations with the place as well as the space that they occupied in the labour force. An understanding of this fact is fundamental to an understanding of the history of many pastoral properties in New South Wales.

MASSACRES ON THE MACLEAY

Oral accounts tend to emphasise the remembered history of the past 50 years, but collective memory of much earlier, brutal encounters between Aboriginal people and settlers are also recounted. In 1974, the skull and some post-cranial skeletal remains of an Aboriginal woman were found on the side of an eroding embankment just below the Kunderang homestead. An archaeologist from the University of New England was called in to identify whether they were Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal skeletal remains, and they were removed from the site. Although the remains of the skull turned out to be older than the period of European contact (Davidson 1982), the event is remembered with some discomfort by the local Aboriginal community because it is widely held that massacres of Aboriginal people occurred in the area around Kunderang in the 1830s and 1840s. Deliberations over what to do with the skeletal remains have caused many people concern: ‘They don’t want to touch it ... they’ve got it in their mind that the head’s not with the rest of the body, and they’ll be haunted for the rest of their lives. They don’t want to look at it’ (Bruce Lockwood interview, 21 March 2001).

The Macleay Gorges were the locale of some of the most violent and sustained periods of Aboriginal-settler conflict in New South Wales. Squatters invaded the New England tableland in the mid 1830s, and between 1839 and 1842, Campbell describes ‘the atrocities committed by both sides ... [as] both extreme and frequent’ (1977: 14). Conflicts continued in the upper and middle reaches of the Macleay, with one correspondent in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1849 commenting on the ‘daily increasing depredations of the blacks on the upper part of the river and the borders of New England. In two instances, at Trappand’s Flat and Cunderang, they have speared cattle in the stockyards ... the hut at one station they have burned’ (cited in Prineas 1997: 195).

Debate exists over the nature of frontier violence in Australia (Manne 2001: 93ff). However in the upper and middle reaches of the Macleay and on the New England tablelands, it was, in the words of Lang, ‘a frontier war’ (1865). From 1838 to 1851, evidence suggests there were up to 15 massacres of Aboriginal groups on the Macleay, with the possibility of many more isolated killings by cedar cutters, graziers and police (Blomfield 1981). Using guerilla-style tactics, Aboriginal people formed relatively large groups that attacked shepherds, homesteads, cattle and sheep before retreating into the gorges (eg see M McMaugh nd). The protracted period of massacres and ‘hit and run’ raids on pastoral properties was effectively ended in 1851 by the establishment of a native police force at Nulla Nulla Creek and through the effect of losses during this long period of punitive raids and skirmishes.

THE 1840 MASSACRE

There appear to have been at least two large massacres within the immediate vicinity of Cunderang in the 1840s. The first was reported merely as a theft of sheep by Aboriginal people (with no casualties) in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 14 June 1840, but according to Henderson some ten years later, a massacre of two or three dozen men appears to have occurred near Kunderang Brook. The *Herald’s* report reads:

Towards the end of last month, Sergeant Freer, travelling from New England down the bed of the Macleay River with a large flock of sheep, and having one afternoon at a crossing place missed three hundred and seventy of them, he returned to search, accompanied by a

stockman and a mounted black. The latter soon discovered the stock had been driven into the mountains by the Blacks. Upon returning to the place he last saw the Blacks, here they found the remains of about sixty sheep and three yards most ingeniously constructed. Following on their trail, Mr Freer and party proceeded about twelve miles up Kunderang Brook, where they found the Blacks had turned across the mountains. Continuing the trail, the party ultimately found the Blacks in the act of preparing a meal of mutton and upon being fired upon they speedily decamped, but without two hundred and twenty sheep that were still alive (Quoted in Prineas 1997: 195)

This account is interesting for several reasons, not the least being the skill that Aboriginal people in the Macleay had already developed in controlling stock, being able to muster several hundred head of sheep and control them through the use of stockyards. Henderson also notes regarding a similar sheep theft on the Macleay that ‘The natives had managed wonderfully well, one of the gins taking them out to graze every day, and penning them up at night in bush-yards, made by the tribe of stakes and boughs of trees’ (Henderson 1851b: 6).

This is significant, as Aboriginal people on the Macleay were resisting pastoralists through systematic spearing of sheep and cattle (Morris 1989: 29), as well as utilising this new food source to support the large numbers of Aboriginal refugees who had retreated into the gorge country. Blomfield (1981) noted the similarity between the *Sydney Morning Herald* account and another produced by Henderson 11 years later: ‘Several thousand sheep were being brought into the district ... Twenty-five miles up the Macleay when crossing, the blacks cut off five hundred. As a result of this loss two or three dozen men were slaughtered later’ (Henderson 1851: 7).

This is also consistent with Annie Baxter’s account of the event:

Thur 30 Apr: Mr Freer came in today – he has met with quite an adventure with the blacks – it seems that after his bringing down the 3071 sheep to the Macleay, the men lost sight of 168 – and the blacks got them – they not only eat most of them, but wasted them in the most terrible manner possible – Mr Freer went with 2 men to get them and they defied him – of course his party not being sufficiently strong he had to return for more – He did so, and they surprised the Natives eating their mutton at their camp – there was a terrible encounter – and some of the unfortunate creatures killed (Frost 1992).

THE 1845 MASSACRE

Geoffrey Blomfield, drawing on both documentary data and recollections of local pioneer pastoralists, documents the reprisal murders of two shepherds and their wives at Kunderang by local Aboriginal people. The murders were reported by McMaugh in her *Early Settlement of the Upper Macleay*:

In 1845, Kunderang station ... had two shepherds and their wives there, and they were found dead, murdered by the blacks but it was quite a week before their bodies were found and about eight hundred sheep also missing, the matter was reported to the Commissioner named Massie at Kempsey and he in company with John McMaugh and several men from the station tracked the sheep to where the blacks had driven them. They found a large number of them camped under a cliff ... and a great number of the blacks were killed ... a few of the sheep were found but the blacks were so numerous that they killed and ate twenty a night (H McMaugh nd: 5).

Blomfield distinguishes between this and another massacre which ‘Falls country’ oral tradition says occurred around the same time at Douralie Creek (1981; see also Weingarth 1922; Ellen 1953). It is quite possible that the Douralie Creek massacre was the event discussed by Henderson which was said to have occurred somewhere down the Kunderang

Brook in 1840. Alternatively the murders could have been another reprisal in response to the widespread killing of cattle and sheep that occurred in the Macleay during the 1840s.

OTHER MASSACRES ON THE MACLEAY

In addition to massacres near Kunderang, several other massacres of Aboriginal people occurred up and down the Macleay River around this time. Mary McMaugh and John Henderson both make reference to massacres of Aboriginal people by cedar cutters on the Macleay at Wabra Station, Towel Creek, Hendersons Creek and Sheep Station Bluff. Blomfield argues that in the first 25 years of settlement in the Manning and Macleay, about one-third of the estimated 4000 Aboriginal inhabitants of the region were killed (1981).

Physical evidence of the fear and mistrust between settlers and Aboriginal people during the early decades of pastoralism in the Macleay have been left in the very fabric of the homes of European pastoralists. Weingarh states that the 1840s homestead on the Wabra Station, one of the largest in the Macleay, was built with 'auger holes'. These perforations allowed occupants to shoot from the inside at what he called 'troublesome Aborigines' (1922: 218). The original McMaugh homestead, one of the first built in the region, is also thought to have incorporated these holes in the slab walls (Ellen 1953). Apparently, certain ladies such as Mrs McMaugh resorted to dressing in men's clothing and shooting at trespassing Aborigines while the property's men were away (H McMaugh nd; M McMaugh nd).

McDonald, Commissioner of Crown Lands for the New England district, indicated the way that the geographic landscape of the Macleay River region impacted on frontier violence in the 1840 and 1850s. His reports reveal that the area was once a refuge for Aboriginal guerilla fighters engaged in a long and violent struggle against white invasion:

During the past year only one Outrage of a serious nature has been committed by the Natives which occurred in October last on the Station of the Messrs Irby on the Northern limit of the District where a shepherd was barbarously murdered and mangled by them – some cattle and sheep have been stolen and slaughtered on the Eastern Falls of the Table land – the precipitous and profound Ravines of which, afford them safe harbour and secure retreat, where neither man nor horse can follow' (CLC New England District 1855).

The Macleay River valley's location as a site of particularly intense colonial violence and Aboriginal resistance (Neil 1972; Blomfield 1981; Weingarh 1922) can be explained in part by the political timing of the squatter's push into the Macleay (see Cole 2001). The Macleay was invaded during the rule of Governor Brisbane and later Governor Darling: it was Governor Brisbane who declared martial law in the colony; and Darling who advised settlers to organise their own protection against Aboriginal resistance fighters defending their traditional lands.

The specifics of geography also contributed to the high levels of violence on this 'frontier'. The 'Falls country', as the landscape came to be called, was where numbers of Aboriginal people retreated or were driven from the tablelands and fertile coastal strip. This is where, as Blomfield puts it, 'they turned and fought back' (1981: 14). The rugged country supported Aboriginal refugees from the white-occupied areas and provided a base for resistance for 30 or more years after about 1838 (Blomfield 1981; Cohen 1987; see Reports by CLCs Massie, McDonald and Wright in Governor's Despatches).

KUNDERANG AS AN ICONIC PLACE

While not forgetting this violent past, for Aboriginal people today, Kunderang is a symbol of a particular period in their history which is in many ways considered to have been a 'golden-age', when the skills of Aboriginal people were prized and desirable. Kunderang is clearly important to the members of local Aboriginal communities as a symbol of a particular



FIGURE 5.13 The reconstructed forge building, c 2001.



FIGURE 5.14 Stockmen's graffiti, forge building, c 2001.

period in Aboriginal-settler Australian relations, and as a place where the work of Aboriginal people was valued:

Well Kunderang is one place that is dear to me. I've grown up with it all my life. I remember when my mother was alive she was going crook on my father because he stayed away too long. You remember little things; it sticks in your mind. Once they got there they had to make sure the fences were right and muster the cattle and the horses and they used to break in the horses and then they'd go droving. Well if it rained they'd [have] to stay longer. But as I say these days now they truck the cattle everywhere (Christine Kim interview, 20 March 2001).

Part of this status resides in the association with the work and working lives of the fathers and grandfathers of the present generation:

Dad used to love to come up to go to the rodeos because all the Kunderang bullocks and the Kunderang horses were there. He used to always get to take 'em around to them. He used to be so excited to see these horses from Kunderang. Buck jumping, and all the cattle ... They used to do a lot of droving in those days, because they never used to have trucks. I mean trucks would take the cattle around but nowadays it's really easy, they've got trucks that cart everything (Christine Kim interview, 20 March 2001).

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE TO ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND ITS HERITAGE FABRIC

There are particular aspects of the heritage fabric associated with Kunderang that are considered to speak in special ways to local Aboriginal people. The authenticity and age of these buildings is paramount to their ability to tell this history.

STOCKMAN'S GRAFFITI

One important material trace of the working lives of Aboriginal men at Kunderang is contained in graffiti executed by (predominately) Aboriginal stockmen in the forge and former Aboriginal stockmen's hut (see Sullivan 1989; Burke 1993). The graffiti consists of a series of names and initials of stockmen executed in shoeing nails and scratched into the ceiling joists and timber posts in the central portion of the forge building. An initialled board which was once part of the original Aboriginal stockmen's hut was also preserved during the Kellion period through its incorporation in repairs to the front corner of the homestead (Sullivan 1989: 65).

The forge building is a slab-sided, timber-pole structure with corrugated iron roof, constructed around 1900 during the Fitzgerald period of management of East Kunderang. There are four styles of graffiti: branded, carved, punched, and nailed (using shoeing nails).

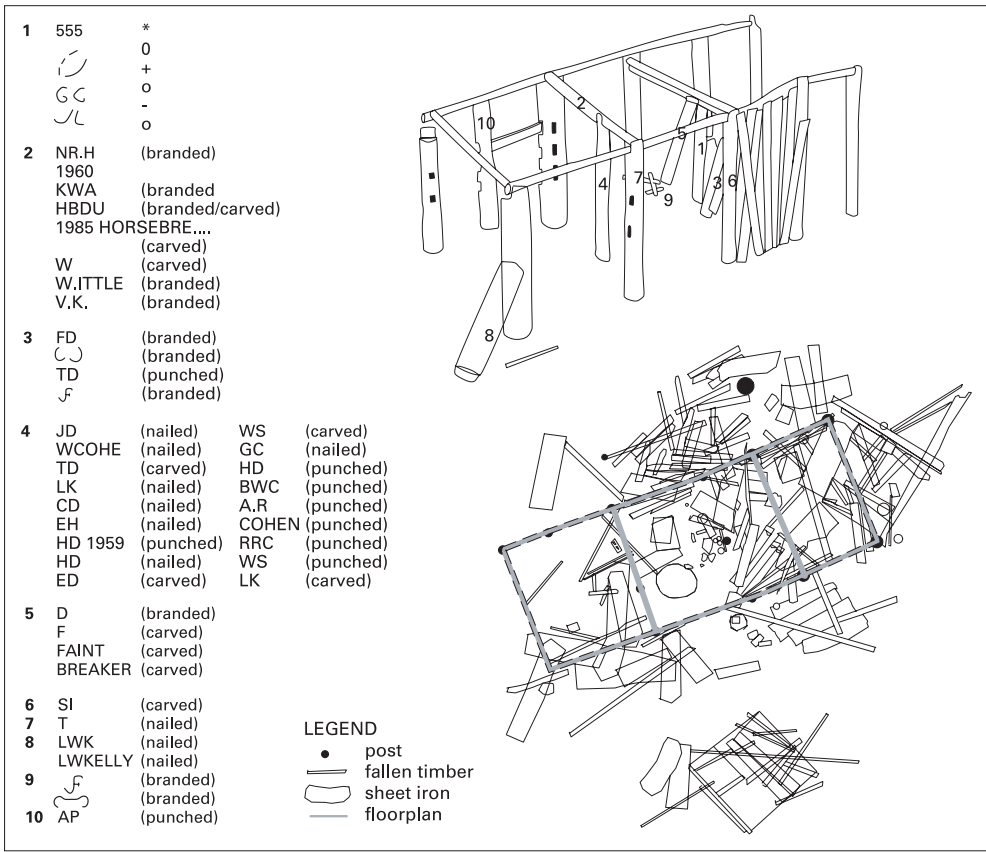


FIGURE 5.15 (left) Isometric and plan views of forge and shoeing building showing location and details of stockman's graffiti c 1993 (after Burke 1993: 29 and 31; redrawn with annotation by author)

Burke (1993: 30) documented in detail the initials and other graffiti and mapped their location on a plan of the building prior to reconstruction works undertaken by the former NPWS in 1994. (I have redrawn and annotated her original survey of the structure as it existed in 1993 and the graffiti in the building as Figure 5.15 based on her original drawings and my own field observations made in 2001–02.)

Initials can be matched against the continuous series of wages records from 1919 to 1947: 'W Cohen' (Bill Cohen), 'GC' (George Cohen), 'Cohen', 'LWK', 'LW Kelly' and 'LK' (Lewis Kelly), 'BWC' (Bill Cohen or William Crawford), 'J Little', 'TD' (Tommy Davison or Tommy Dureaux), 'FD' (Fred Dunn), 'ED' (Edward Dureaux?), 'HD' and 'HD 1959' (Henry Dunn), 'JD' (Johnny Dureaux), 'W Little' and 'NRH' (N Hilton), are all names and initials of Aboriginal people from Bellbrook who are known to have worked on East Kunderang over this time.

Other names include 'Faint', probably Cliff Faint, a non-Aboriginal man who worked on Kunderang in the late 1940s and 1950s and who now owns land and runs cattle in the surrounding area. Twenty-two out of 39 initials can be identified (some of the graffiti is composed of numbers and motifs, or generic terms such as 'BREAKER' or 'HORSE BRE[AKER]'), and 21 sets of initials belong to Aboriginal people. This simple act of marking one's name as part of the routine of undertaking pastoral labour can be seen as an almost defiant act that works against the exclusion of Aboriginal people from the documentary histories associated with East Kunderang. For this reason the heritage fabric associated with this building is considered of great importance to the local Aboriginal community.

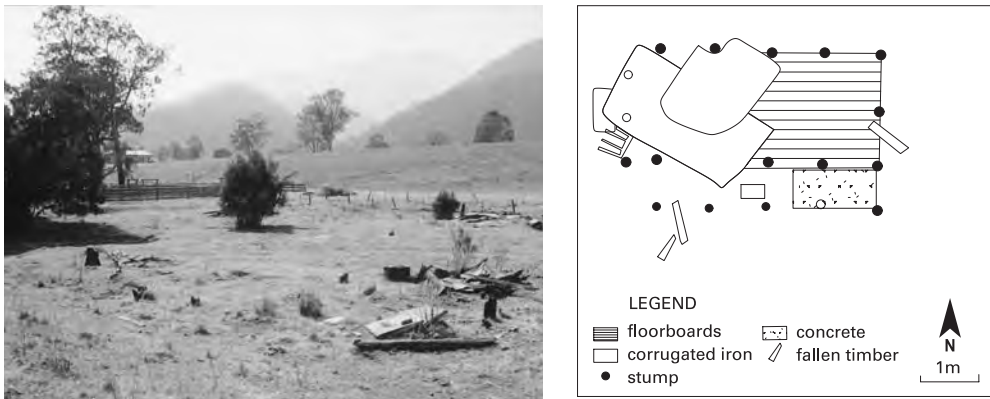


FIGURE 5.16 (left) The site of the Aboriginal stockmen's hut, looking towards the homestead, c 2000.

FIGURE 5.17 (right) Plan of the Aboriginal stockmen's hut site.

THE ABORIGINAL STOCKMEN'S HUT

The remains of the former Aboriginal stockmen's quarters, rebuilt during the Kellion period and then burnt during a fire in 1997, are also considered very important to the associations of Kunderang with renowned Aboriginal stockmen from Georges Creek and Bellbrook (see Bruce Lockwood's discussion earlier this chapter). Unfortunately little original fabric survives in this ruin. The humility of this structure is thought to speak of the often poor conditions under which stockmen, particularly Aboriginal stockmen, found themselves living, even as recently as the middle part of the twentieth century.

POWER, STATUS AND SPACE

The spatial relationship and physical contrast between the stockmen's hut and the homestead buildings are also considered to be important in documenting the low status of Aboriginal people who worked on pastoral properties, despite their skill. Bourdieu's work (1977: 89; discussion in Tilley 1999) has demonstrated that houses provide a coherent 'language' to organise reality. This power and status-based spatial metaphor of the 'big house' and 'stockmen's hut' was destabilised in later years of Kunderang's operations – a fact that was revelled in by most of the Aboriginal people who recounted this as a reaction against this restrictive spatial order: 'After a while when Alec was going away, the blackfellas used to go over and stay in the homestead ... they thought they were kings in there!' (Bruce Lockwood interview, 21 March 2001).

GENDER AND HERITAGE FABRIC

The absence of women, particularly Aboriginal women, from Kunderang after Alec and Thelma McDonell moved to Georges Creek, masks the earlier period in which both Aboriginal women and men were involved in the work of the station. Very little heritage fabric remains which could speak of the presence of Aboriginal women at Kunderang during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This suggests the usefulness of a thorough investigation of oral and documentary historical sources in understanding a place. There is a clear need for an interpretation that highlights the connections between Kunderang and other places where women lived and worked, such as Georges Creek and Bellbrook. Such an investigation could also interpret the earlier period in which women assisted with a range of domestic tasks at the homestead.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE’S SKILL WITH STATION WORK

The skill of the Aboriginal stockmen who worked at Kunderang is remembered particularly fondly. It is generally felt that the contribution of Aboriginal stock workers to Kunderang is not well known:

if they, the black fellas, wasn't there they wouldn't be able to do it. And that Terry Olden the greatest buck jump rider in Australia he went down there just to go out for a ride with 'em and he went out and that evening he came home early before the other fellas and when they come home they said 'What happened to you?' And he said, 'I'm not going out with you bloody idiots again. You'll kill yourselves.' They took some following when they took after cattle. Where the cattle went, they went (Bruce Lockwood interview, 21 March 2001).

The renown of Kunderang’s stockmen, cattle and horses is intimately connected with the romantic theme of the ruggedness of the landscape and the remoteness of the pastoral property. For Aboriginal people, Kunderang forms a communicative bridge between past and present; its isolation allows them to vividly invoke the spirits of their ancestors who worked and lived there. As a site associated with the sustained labour of Gumbaingir and Dhan-gadi Aboriginal people, Kunderang also forms an integral piece in the jigsaw that is the post-invasion Aboriginal history of the Macleay gorges. It is an iconic place, one that represents and evokes the long history of Aboriginal work and domestic lives in the Kunderang Gorges.

DISCUSSION

Aboriginal people are at first glance relatively invisible in the documentary and archaeological records associated with East Kunderang. Archaeologists often look for evidence of Aboriginal people in the historic period through investigation of post-contact archaeological sites. These sites typically contain artefacts such as flaked bottle glass which can firmly place Aboriginal people at the site after the period of sustained non-Aboriginal settlement of the area (see further discussion in Chapter 8). At first glance there is little at the homestead that looks like a ‘contact site’ documenting the presence or work of Aboriginal people. (A small scatter of flaked glass and ceramic does exist to the north of the homestead, but there are less than half a dozen artefacts here that could be identified as clearly flaked.)

When I first visited East Kunderang, this seemed to me somewhat remarkable given the great significance of the place to Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal stockmen of East Kunderang were locally renowned as horsemen of the highest skill. Yet a focus on the archaeology of the pastoral station in isolation would yield relatively little information regarding the history of Aboriginal labour on Kunderang. However, the oral histories of Aboriginal pastoral workers and their families make important spatial connections between Kunderang and various other places in the landscape. They explain the relative invisibility of Aboriginal people in terms of how they used the space of the station and the gorge country, and the relationship between Kunderang and other key sites such as Bellbrook reserve and Georges Creek holiday camp.

An analysis of the wages records from Kunderang illustrates the long, inter-generational association of more than 20 Aboriginal families with East Kunderang. This represents a substantial number of people who lived and worked regularly on the property, and whose lives were connected intimately and in complex ways with those of its settler pastoralists and the non-Aboriginal labourers who fenced, mustered and drove cattle alongside them. The oral histories of former pastoral workers and their families demonstrate the deep and intimate attachment that contemporary local Aboriginal communities feel for the place. This association is literally written on to the fabric of the homestead buildings along with the

stockmen’s initials and graffiti that are now preserved in the shoeing forge building which has been reconstructed at the Homestead.

It is impossible to understand the social or labour history of East Kunderang without an understanding of the pre- and post-contact Aboriginal history of the Macleay. Aboriginal people not only formed the backbone of the labour force after the turn of the twentieth century for Kunderang, but also played a significant role during the nineteenth century in assisting with the process of surveying and opening up the land for settlement. The sustained period of frontier warfare between Aboriginal people and settlers in the Macleay is also an important part of the shared history of East Kunderang.

There is a fundamental mismatch between the traditional historical narrative, produced as part of Chapter 4, and the ‘Aboriginal history’ of East Kunderang presented here. In attempting to find a ‘shared’ history, the cynical reader may note that what I have actually done is produce two separate, yet alternative histories of place. This relates at least in part to the methods employed in each. The absence of detail on the lives of Aboriginal people in the documents that form the basis for producing the history of Kunderang up until the 1940s means that the Aboriginal history of the station is somewhat ‘top heavy’. Details seem to be fleshed out in the post-1940 era, the same period in which we have access to oral accounts of the station. In the next and final chapter on Kunderang, I want to address Aboriginal and settler pastoralists’ relationship with the landscape of the Kunderang ravines as one avenue through which to explore the *shared* landscape histories of East Kunderang.

CHAPTER 6

Mustering in the Kunderang Gorges

Mervyn Cohen: We used to take them [cattle] up, not a big mob, because you couldn't – the night paddock wouldn't hold them. Plus the bridle track that you had to go through would be probably only be the width of this table and you're going up hill, climbing up the spur. And so you couldn't take too many because once they get over the side off the track, you'd lose the lot. So I think by the time we got them up there it was, I think it was close to 300 head and they were taken from there to Gloucester...

RH: Would you mind drawing on our map where you remember you used to muster, the ridge you used to use, that 'Bridle Spur'?

MC: Well that's right up in the Apsley, that's going up towards Reedy Creek (interview, 17 May 2001).

During the community consultation process for the development of a new Conservation Management Plan for East Kunderang, a focus group of about 40 people met at East Kunderang on 22 March 2001. Further workshops in Armidale run by the consultant team and myself broadened this to include another 20 people. The groups, drawn from a diverse range of backgrounds (including Aboriginal people, neighbours, former station workers, DEC staff, conservationists and tourism operators) were broken into smaller groups of up to ten people in a 'think tank' session. Each group was asked, among other things, to consider the special values or features associated with East Kunderang that they would like to preserve. During later discussion, the groups each presented the results of their discussion to the others. Out of this discussion developed a master set of special features and values that each person was asked to rank in order of importance.

The top five responses (Jill Sheppard Heritage Consultants 2001b) were:

- 1 East Kunderang as a link to other places in the Falls country via tracks and the river, as part of a traditional Aboriginal route overwritten and absorbed by pastoral stock-routes and recreational walking tracks
- 2 East Kunderang's pastoral history ... as a former working property and a monument to the role and contribution of former stockmen of both Aboriginal and European descent
- 3 East Kunderang's potential as an educational resource (bush foods, rainforest, flora and fauna) including its natural beauty and representative topography
- 4 The Aboriginal history of the place including massacre sites
- 5 East Kunderang as an authentic historic homestead.

I think it is important to focus on the community's evaluation of East Kunderang as a 'linking place' to other locations, and its relationship with routes and movement through the landscape. While mapping the 'landscape biographies' that I had begun for this study, the concept of Kunderang as a pastoral landscape emerged from hearing both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal pastoral workers discuss the nature of their work and their appreciation of the landscape. This chapter discusses the landscape heritage of pastoralism at East Kunderang.

ABORIGINAL TRACKS AND PATHWAYS IN THE KUNDERANG GORGES

In Chapter 2, I discussed the importance of travelling stock-routes for the passage of cattle and sheep to market, and the role of explorers and surveyors both in gazetting the stock-routes as well as in opening up country to pastoral settlement. There is a wide range of literature on the role that mapping played in the colonial project (eg Harley 1988; 1992; Huggan 1991; Jacobs 1996). Explorers and cartographers used the authority that maps have been attributed with in Western thought to construct particular views and understandings of the Australian landscape. One perspective espoused by colonial mapmakers was the connection between unsurveyed lands and the blank space of an undrawn map (Ryan 1996), which underpinned the concept of *terra nullius*. As in many other parts of Australia, Aboriginal people were actively involved in surveying the colonial landscape, although later usually written out of the process. However, the role of Aboriginal people in assisting in the survey of lands on the Macleay River, and in particular in the Kunderang Gorges, meant that white settlers often ended up using long-established Aboriginal pathways and patterns of movement through this landscape. This has implications for the way in which both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal pastoral workers came to understand the landscape of the Kunderang ravines during the twentieth century.

An extract from Surveyor Clement Hodgkinson's field books from the Macleay River valley in April 1841 is revealing of the interactions between surveyors, squatters and Aboriginal communities. Note in particular the role that Aboriginal men played in assisting the surveyors and leading the way through the most difficult terrain:

Up the Macleay river accompanied by a stockman, and after reaching the Chapman Heifer station we followed the line of trees marked by the Crown Land Commissioner towards the Clarence along the route shown him by the blacks, and at dusk we came across a camp of natives three of whom we engaged to accompany us to shew us the points on the river and creeks where it was practicable to cross ... I called [the creek] after the name given to it by the Aborigines the 'Agomera Creek' ... we had to dismount and help the blacks for some miles in cutting a passage through the matted and tangled creepers ... Wednesday after drying out our blankets and wet apparel I started at 7 o'clock and soon encountered a large tribe of natives who followed us about 50 yards in our rear keeping up an animated conversation with our tame Black fellows – the result was favourable as fifteen or twenty of them were induced to join us and did us a great service with their boomerangs in hacking a passage through the bushes ... we joined the blacks here making a repast on bush figs which were plentifully strewed on the ground, their flavour was very agreeable being luscious yet slightly acid – here the greater part of the wild blacks left us, five of them remaining with us to show us the best passes over the mountains ... came to a steep descent [down] which we had great difficulty leading our horses ... we had to walk five sixths of the distance whilst the blacks carried our provisions on their heads (Letters received from surveyor Jan 1840–May 1842, SRNSW, 2/1543).

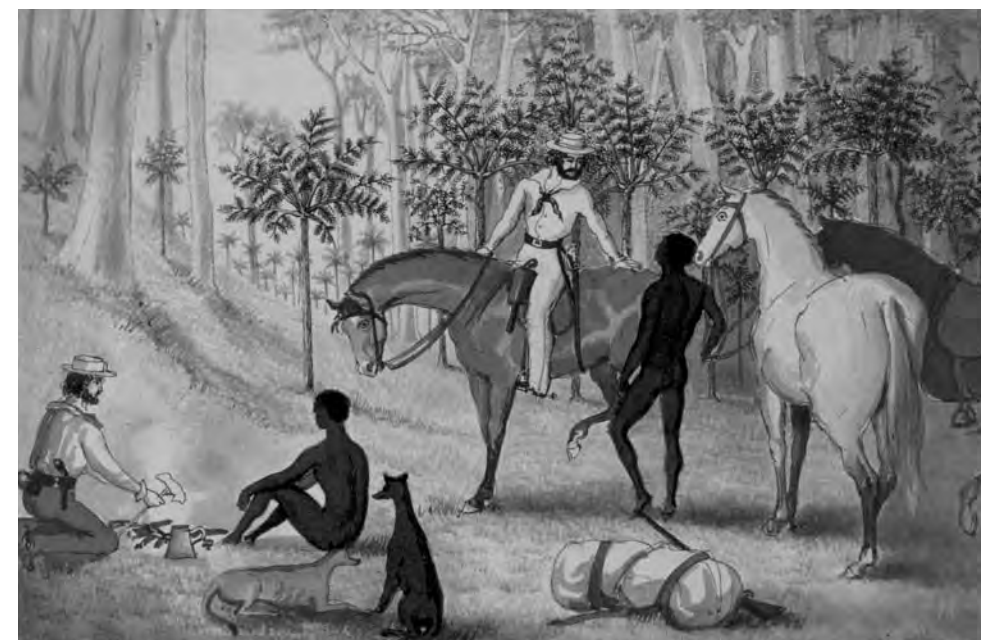


FIGURE 6.1 Clement Hodgkinson, 'Halt near a fern tree scrub', c. 1843. Title from engraving bound with the original in *Australia from Port Macquarie to Morton Bay*. (Courtesy National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an6617599)

Surveyors' field books from the mid-north coast and New England areas present a picture of men looking over, measuring, mapping and marking out the land so that it could be leased or sold by the government for pastoralism. However, the role of Aboriginal people in assisting with this process, and hence the way in which surveyors used existing pathways and tracks to survey and 'open up' the country, is not particularly well known (but see Baker 1997). The dichotomy often proposed between Aboriginal and European ways of viewing the landscape (eg Strang 1997; 2001) becomes, in the light of this, somewhat more difficult to maintain.

Clearly surveyors, and pastoralists after them, were using well established Aboriginal pathways and travel routes to infiltrate the gorge country. In the post-contact landscape of the gorges, this provided an opportunity for Aboriginal people and settlers to encounter and experience the landscape in similar ways – in addition to encountering each other. The use of what was essentially an indigenous land-use pattern by white settlers on the Macleay is reflected in the co-occurrence of pre-contact Aboriginal sites with pastoral facilities at all of the pastoral hut and mustering camp sites investigated in this study (see below).

As discussed earlier in Chapter 4, John Oxley's 1819 exploring party attempted to find a route eastwards from Tamworth to the coast, but were halted by the steep and rugged precipices of the Kunderang Gorges. The path mapped by Hodgkinson in the 1840s took him up the Macleay to Georges Creek junction, where his Aboriginal assistants showed him the 'Big Hill' spur (Campbell 1933), which would later become the main access road from the Macleay River valley to the tablelands. When Hodgkinson assessed the spur it was too impractical for vehicular traffic – although it was used as a stock-route – and it remained so until around 1902 when it became the main Kempsey–Armidale route. Local Aboriginal people showed another route to explorer JH Kemp in 1856 (Neil 1972: 52; see discussion in *Armidale Express* 23 August and 18 October 1856). This route, which split off from the Macleay and tracked north along Five Day Creek, was the main traffic route between 1857 and the turn of the century, falling into disuse when the Big Hill track was improved and made available to general traffic.

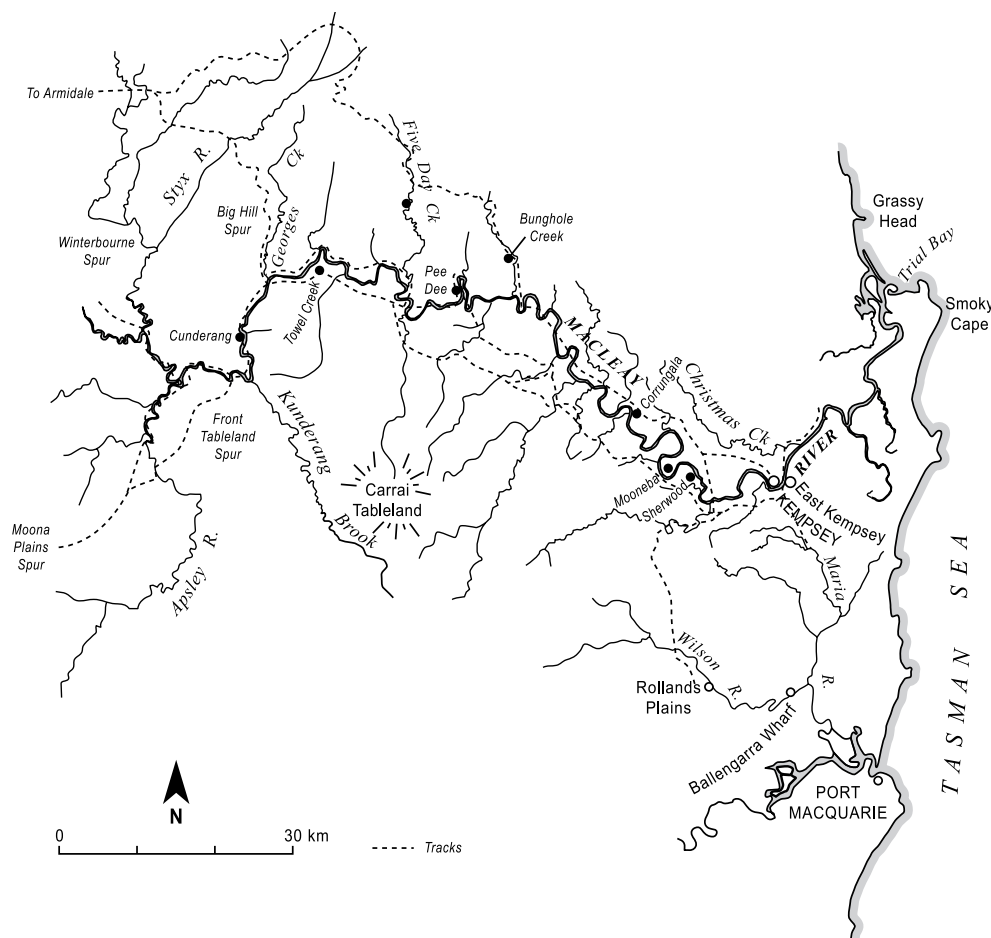


FIGURE 6.2 Early tracks and pathways along the Macleay River.

It appears unlikely that Hodgkinson was the first to find a route from the Macleay to the tableland. Weingarh (1922), based on the recollections of Mrs Hugh McMaugh (nd), records that John McMaugh and Jack Chrisholm 'found' a track by following the Macleay down Kunderang Brook:

crossing and re- it to its junction with the Muddy River; then they found a track either up a spur between that river and the Chandler River to the tableland, or they followed up Muddy River to Postman's Creek and then went up a spur between that river and the creek. There is no doubt that this was the track followed by Mrs Baxter (Weingarh 1922: 220).

Other 1840s stock-routes to the tablelands via Winterbourne, Enmore and Moona Plains station spurs are mentioned by both Weingarh and Campbell, who quotes Anne Baxter's *Memories of the Past*:

Our second day's stage was to a station of Messrs Betts and Panton [Long Flat]. We had to cross the river about twenty one times in thirty three miles ... upon reaching the Winterbourne spur we had a further addition to our party this night, in the form of seven shepherds watching three thousand sheep of Major Innes', and which were to steer our course on the morrow. We ascended the Tableland the following morning (cited in Weingarh 1922: 70).

These tracks and pathways made use of a consistent pattern of movement – along the ravines and up one or two prominent spurs to the tablelands. McMaugh's track is also likely to have been the one used during the 1840 sheep muster led by Freer (see Chapter 5) which led to the massacre of Aboriginal people in the Kunderang Brook. These early tracks and pathways dating to the period 1840–1856 are mapped in Figure 6.2.

In some cases there is evidence that these pathways took the form of physically cleared tracks that were 'discovered' and further cleared by white settlers and explorers, or which settlers were shown by the Aboriginal people who had cleared and maintained them. In two out of three cases, explicit reference is made to the use of Aboriginal people as 'guides', while in the third case reference is made to the discovery of a physical pathway or track, also clearly an established Aboriginal pathway. All three tracks became important stock-routes and mustering tracks and were in continuous use for over 130 years between the 1850s and the 1980s when Oxley Wild Rivers National Park was gazetted.

In addition to explorers and surveyors, pastoralists also used Aboriginal people's detailed knowledge of the landscape in finding tracks and routes through the country. As late as the 1930s, Alan Youdale used an Aboriginal man as a guide to assist in selecting his country in the headwaters of the Kunderang Brook (see Chapter 4). The role of Aboriginal people in showing early settlers and explorers these routes between the gorges and the tableland suggests the need for a more detailed examination of pre-contact Aboriginal patterns of movement in the Kunderang Gorges.

PRE-CONTACT ABORIGINAL PATHWAYS IN THE KUNDERANG GORGES

Archaeological research tends to concentrate on particular places where accumulations of culturally generated materials are preserved in the landscape: rockshelters and caves; flat, unmodified areas of land where stone artefacts remain scattered where they fell while being knapped; rocks with painted or engraved art on them. This focus on individual 'sites' within a landscape is clearly problematic in the study of the land-use patterns of nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples. While early accounts of Aboriginal travel routes have often been used by archaeologists to counter this emphasis on sites and to develop models of past land use, the value of these records in understanding the transferral of ways of understanding the landscape from Aboriginal to settler Australians has rarely been discussed. Here I examine archaeological and ethnohistoric models of pre-contact Aboriginal patterns of land use, and their synergy with later pastoral land uses in the Kunderang Ravines, suggesting a causal relationship between the two.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MODELS FOR MOVEMENT BETWEEN COAST AND HINTERLAND

The notion of seasonal movement between the coast and the mountainous hinterland along the mid-north coast has been the subject of considerable debate amongst archaeologists since the 1970s. McBryde's work in the New England tablelands (1974) led her to develop a hypothesis of seasonal mobility which was characterised by the exploitation of coastal resources during the summer months, and of upland resources during the winter. Belshaw (1978), following McBryde and after analysis of historic accounts, developed a different hypothesis of seasonal movement of the Aboriginal people in which the tablelands formed a 'marchland' area used largely for travel and for the exchange of seasonally available resources between the western-slopes and coastal Aboriginal people. Blomfield recorded that Alan Youdale believed a seasonal travel route of the Dhan-gadi crossed the head of Kunderang Brook and came out near Rollands Plains. He noted the movement of people from the tablelands down to the gorges and coastal areas during the bleak winter months. Similarly, Campbell (1978) suggested that coastal people moved inland during the winter

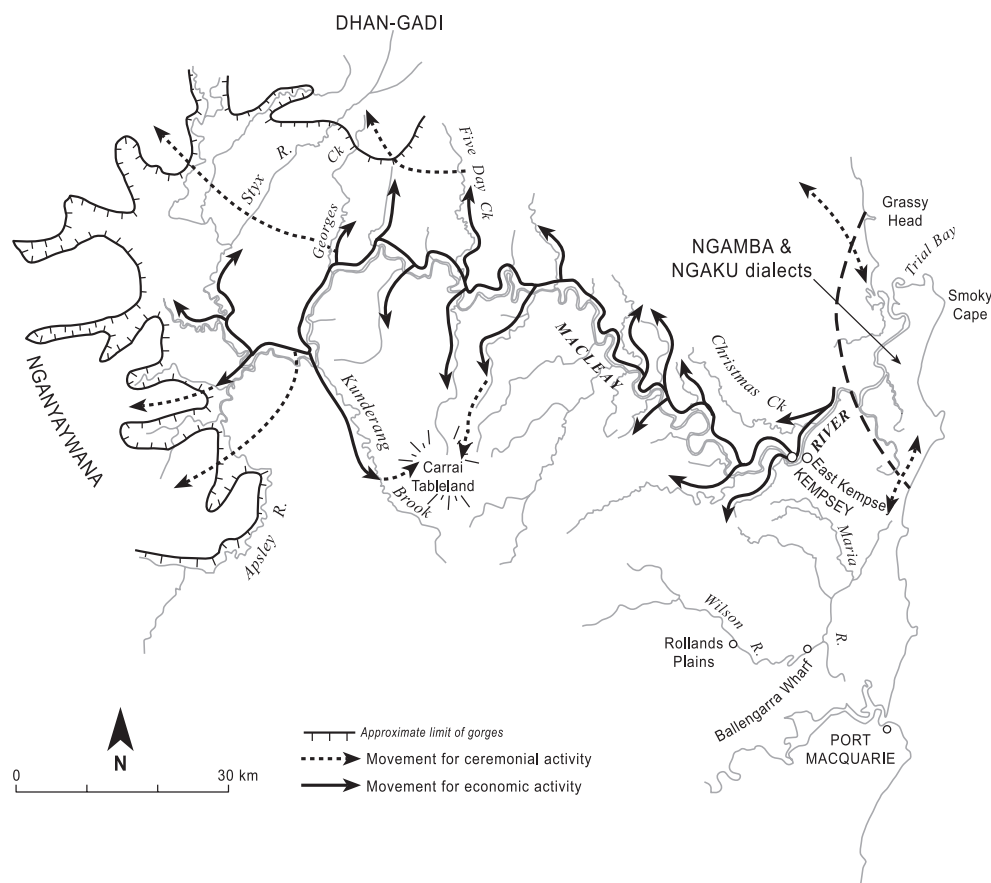


FIGURE 6.3 An illustration demonstrating Godwin's (1999) model of pre-contact interactions between language groups along the Macleay and adjacent areas.

for the same reasons. This suggests that the gorge country may have been a refuge for Aboriginal people from both the tableland and coastal areas during the cold winter months. This pattern of seasonal movement through the gorges was at the time considered to be broadly consistent with the available archaeological evidence (Bowdler 1981; Campbell 1969; 1972; 1978; Davidson 1975; 1982; Godwin 1983; Godwin and Lourandos 1983; McBryde 1974; 1976; 1982).

In disputing this hypothesis, Coleman (1978; 1982) drew on the support of ethnohistoric observations by Hodgkinson (1845), Henderson (1851) and Bundock ([1898]1978) to suggest that Aboriginal people along the Macleay and the Nambucca Rivers were generally quite sedentary. They moved along the coastal zone in search of economic resources, utilising the uplands areas only for ceremonial activities. She suggested that a change in resource use had occurred on the lower Macleay around 2500 years ago, from a focus on estuarine to littoral food and resource gathering. Godwin (1983) modelled Aboriginal subsistence patterns in this area as involving the regular exploitation of estuarine/tidal creek environments, using beaches in the autumn and winter for short periods of time, and using hilly country as refuges during times of flood.

Godwin has reviewed these models on the basis of his own, and other recent archaeological research in the area (1983; 1985; 1990; 1997; 1999). He has suggested that while Coleman's model may describe the evidence for the Macleay accurately, that it cannot be extrapolated to other adjacent river valleys. Godwin's work is somewhat more sophisticated than previous

models, in that he sought to incorporate a range of different sources of data, including linguistic, ethnohistoric and archaeological evidence. On the basis of these sources, he notes that 'strictly' coastal language groups were relatively sedentary and had small territorial ranges (1997). Two such Dhan-gadi language dialect groups, Nyamba and Ngaku, occupied the coastal area at the mouth of the Macleay. These groups only travelled long distances (generally up or down the coast, but also into the tablelands and sub-coastal river valleys) for inter-group ceremonial activities. Sub-coastal groups occasionally travelled to the coast in small numbers, and also travelled north-south from one river valley to the next, and east-west into the tablelands, generally again for ceremonial activity. These groups regularly travelled between the lower reaches of the Macleay and the eastern falls of the New England tablelands throughout the year, and movement into the tablelands particularly took place from late spring to early autumn.

Tablelands groups tended not to move into the gorge country regularly, moving around in small bands throughout the year and holding joint ceremonies with Gamilaraay speakers to the west. Lourandos (1997: 59) suggested that the higher parts of the tablelands were occupied on a permanent basis by one group and seasonally by others from the coast and western slopes.

Godwin and Lourandos (1983) have suggested that birds and aquatic resources in the upland swamps would have provided abundant food supplies for year-round occupation of these areas, while Bowdler (1981) indicates that a staple food in the higher elevations of the plateau country may have been the yam daisy. There is evidence of considerable animosity between tablelands groups and sub-coastal river groups, and tablelands groups would occasionally form joint raiding parties with western-slopes groups against sub-coastal river-valley people (Hodgkinson 1855: 66; Godwin 1997: 300). There is little evidence of tablelands groups acting jointly with sub-coastal river-valley people.

TRAVEL ROUTES AND CEREMONIAL PATHWAYS

What this evidence suggests is that, with the exception of the strictly coastal Nyamba and Ngaku dialect speakers, Dhan-gadi people on the Macleay moved regularly up and down the river valley and into the Kunderang ravines in the warmer months, occasionally moving into the tablelands proper for ceremonial activity. Their well defined tracks were not only travel routes, but ceremonial pathways. Given these pathways were used also for movement into hostile territory, it follows that they would have acted as formal and clearly defined routes of passage. Evidence suggests that these pathways which led to ceremonial clearings and bora grounds in the tablelands were also Dreaming tracks (Cohen 1987). The meaning of these pathways as ceremonial roads and formal routes of passage has ironically been partially erased through their continued use as stock-routes, even though this has maintained their physical presence in the landscape.

Morris (1989: 19) summarised the available historical references for the Macleay Valley to estimate the pre-contact population of the valley at up to 600 people, not counting children. Godwin's (1983; 1985; 1990) archaeological research in the upper Macleay located a number of archaeological campsites in alluvial and colluvial soils near or adjacent to cleared, relatively flat areas along or immediately above watercourses. All sites were within 100–200 metres of a river or permanent watercourse. These sites, and the land-use pattern which they are taken to document, are all thought to date to within the last 2000 years (Godwin 1990). Ian Davidson's (1982) excavations at East Kunderang homestead produced a radiocarbon date of 450 ± 90 years before present, while Godwin notes that finds of backed blades suggest a minimum age of 500–1000 years before present for several archaeological sites on the upper reaches of the Macleay (1995: 523). Davidson (1982: 49) records that there was a flat area below an overhang on the Kunderang Brook which reportedly was used

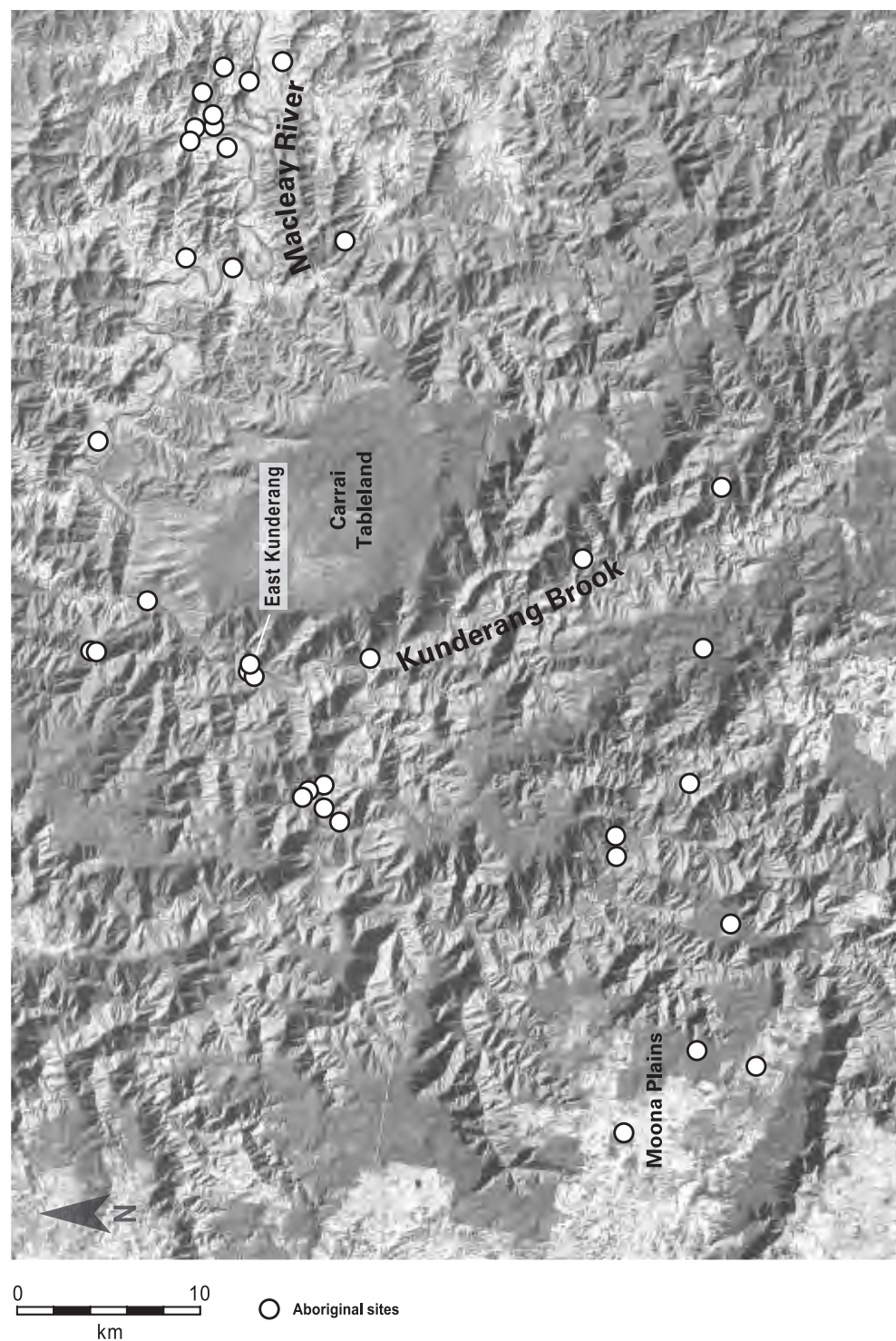


FIGURE 6.4: Aboriginal sites recorded in the Macleay River valley from AHIMS showing co-incidence of sites with spurs and river floodplains. These same locations were favoured for pastoral tracks and infrastructure.

as an overnight campsite until about 1940 by Aboriginal people travelling between Kempsey and the Aboriginal settlement at Walcha.

This general pattern of movement along river systems and spurs, with overnight camping spots on cleared, flat areas near the river or on saddles or surface flats on spurs leading up to the tablelands obviously continued a long traditional pattern of movement for the Aboriginal people who used the Macleay River valley. The constraints caused by such dissected landscapes have been recognised as producing a general pattern of archaeological sites being located along spur lines in saddles and on gently sloping ground on ridges in other forested areas of New South Wales (Byrne 1984; Egloff 1984). A map showing the location of recorded Aboriginal sites from the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS), administered by DEC shows this general pattern on the tablelands, spurs and ridgelines and river flats, and hence their co-occurrence with favoured locations for pastoral infrastructure and pathways.

MUSTERING IN THE FALLS COUNTRY

The connection between the work of mustering cattle, and detailed knowledge and attachment to the spaces in which the former Aboriginal and non-indigenous stockmen and women worked, is important to understanding Kunderang's landscape heritage. The oral histories of former pastoral station workers associated with East Kunderang are rich with details of mustering, riding and walking through the gorge country. A major theme of the oral histories was mapping former mustering routes associated with Kunderang and neighbouring pastoral stations, and discussing the appreciation of the landscape that people developed as a result of their passage through it. All mustering was done on horseback, and it was only in the 1950s and 1960s that motor vehicle access was made available at East Kunderang homestead – when the cedar baron Hayden cut a track in to the homestead (see Chapter 4). Even during the 1990s, when Kunderang cattle were being mustered out of Oxley Wild Rivers and Werrikembe National Parks, it was done predominantly on horseback.

Former Kunderang pastoral station workers who were interviewed spoke at length about their experiences in and around the Kunderang Gorges. The work of mustering cattle was a major component of the pastoral work of most of the men who were employed at East Kunderang. Les O'Neill, who started working for Alex Crawford at Kunderang in 1962, recalls the annual round of mustering Kunderang cattle in detail:

Generally around about January they would do it. We would do the mustering on the top first, that would take a couple of weeks, and then we would go down the gorges towards the end of January ... coming out of winter they would do a little bit of weaning them down there ... out to Moona Plains, bring them up there and wean them and take them back again in a few weeks time (interview, 27 Feb 2001).

Les would also often muster at West Kunderang, at that time under the management of Claude Ciccolini, and for the Crawfords at Moona Plains. Unlike East Kunderang, mustering for the Crawfords at Moona Plains was done using up to five packhorses to allow them to stay up in the gorges for three or four weeks at a time. The packhorses would carry food and swags with tarpaulins to camp under. Les describes the daily routine:

Well you'd be out of bed about daylight and then go and catch the horses. When we were down in the gorges it was only the one paddock, so we used to have to wait until everybody was ready to get the horses in. And we just all saddled up and moved off together along the river. But on the top it was different. When they had the horses in a bigger paddock, we kept the night horse out at night and one fella would get the night horse and go and run them all into the yard there each morning (interview, 27 Feb 2001).

Les thought that this pattern of mustering replicated the Crawford period when much of the area of West Kunderang was still part of the East Kunderang holdings.

Mustering in this deeply dissected landscape was hard work. Stockmen would have to muster cattle up and down creeks and river systems, and up and down spurs from the tablelands into the gorges. Finding and then mustering cattle in such a rugged landscape was incredibly difficult and time-consuming. Tactics included waiting until there had been a dry period, so the cattle would congregate down in the creeks:

We liked to get down there before the rains came, when it was reasonably dry. If it was a bit of a dry period then the cattle would come down to the rivers or the creeks for water, off the steep sides. But if it had been raining for two or three days or a week they'd climb up the sides and they wouldn't come back near the bottom until they had to come back for water ... Early spring, some time before the spring rains, was good. The cattle weren't really strong and they were a bit easier to handle. From then right up until the storms started in January–February. Then it got pretty hard because there was water everywhere. And it made it harder even just to get up and down the Brook ... there was just too much water (Maurice Goodwin interview, 1 March 2001).

Sometimes dogs were used to help in mustering wild cattle:

You had to be pretty quiet and let the dogs find them because even if they smelled you when the wind changed, they were gone. It's just instinct with them. They would plant, they'd lay down once you put the dog round them, tried to work them, they were like little wood ducks, they'd just crawl in under the bushes and lie down and wouldn't move. You could get right up within a few feet of them they wouldn't come out, unless they come out to chase you ... we'd try and get the dogs round them before they saw us, get the dogs to slow them up or circle them in a little mob before they actually saw us – stay out of sight if you could and just let the dogs do most of the work. And then if they busted or split up, which they did pretty often, you'd just get into them and just get what you could ... catch calves or a cow or whatever, tie them up as quick as you could, and go and help the dogs, go and get the next one (Les O'Neill interview, 27 Feb 2001).

Food at such mustering camps and huts consisted largely of tinned meat and vegetables, supplemented with the meat of wild ducks and occasional kangaroos:

We would have our vegetables, potatoes and pumpkin and onion was the main thing. Corned meat for the first few days then we would be on to the tinned meat ... [if we were out there for a long time] Alex Crawford would come out every four or five days or so with a packhorse and bring some fresh stuff for us (Les O'Neill interview, 27 Feb 2001).

MUSTERING TRACKS AND LANDSCAPE BIOGRAPHIES

'Landscape biographies' map the way people's lives were lived in and through the landscape of the Kunderang ravines. The regular seasonal pattern of movement involved in the muster became, for the interviewees, a focal point for discussing the nature of work, their perception of the landscape, and changes in the environmental health of the gorges. Those who were interviewed were keen to pass on their recollections of mustering in the gorge country. Their stories illustrate the processes, as well as the storylines, that mark their own passage through, and hence knowledge of, the rugged landscape.

As discussed in Chapter 3, interviewees were encouraged to make use of maps and aerial photographs at different scales to mark the locations of events and places to which they referred during oral history interviews. What many of the men and women drew was a series of lines that marked both physical tracks and pathways. These reflect the linearity of their history

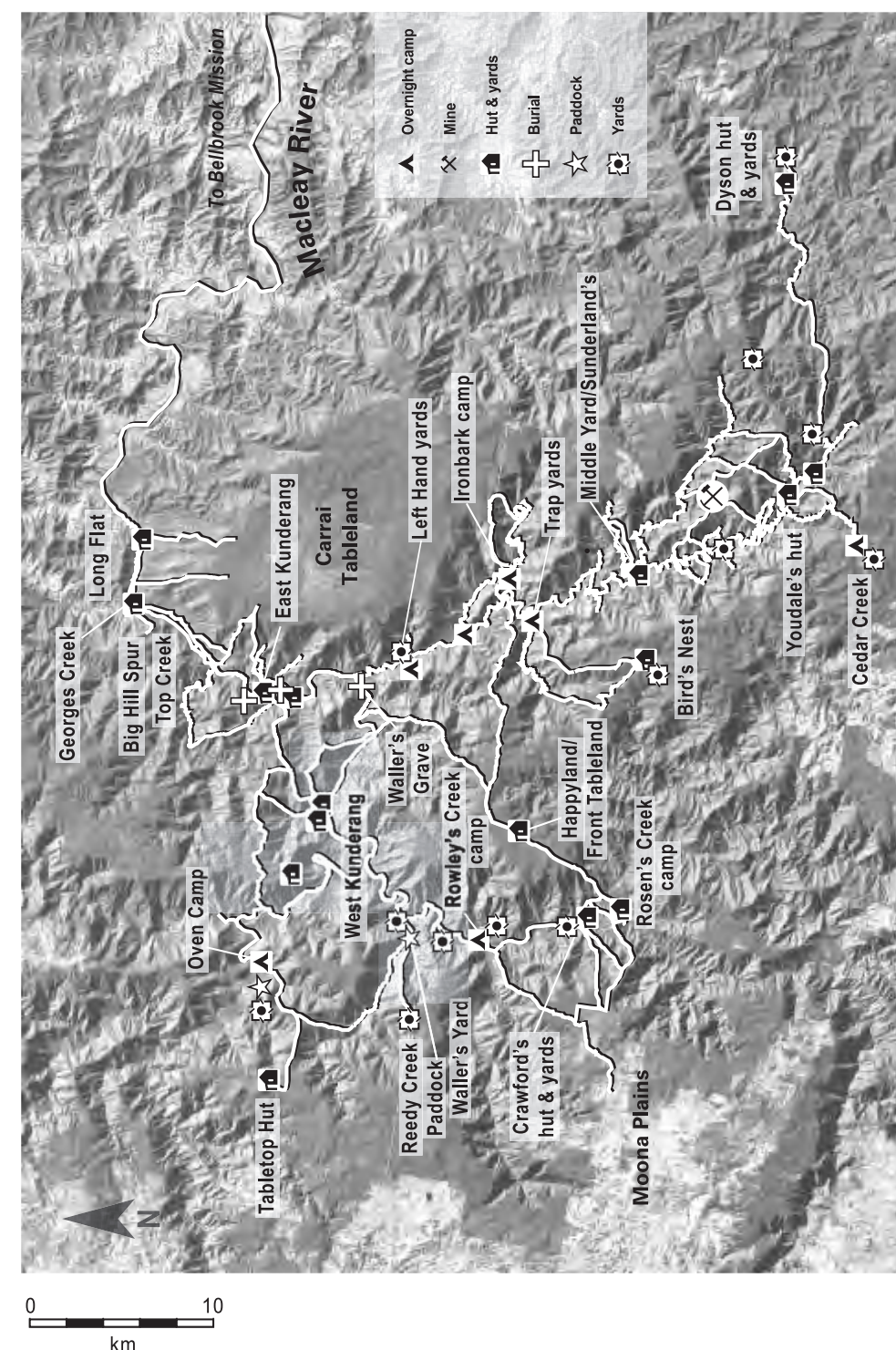


FIGURE 6.5 Mustering and travel routes associated with East Kunderang. Different informants' records appear here as a single line. Mustering huts, camps and yards discussed in the Chapter 6 are labelled.

as it was lived in and through the landscape. The pathways and mustering tracks indicated by the different former pastoral workers represent both different periods in time, as well as the different mustering activities associated with East Kunderang and its neighbours.

Les O'Neill, who mustered on Kunderang in the 1960s, identified the tracks and pathways along which he had travelled while mustering cattle for the Crawfords. Les's recollections relate mainly to mustering cattle on Kunderang and Moona Plains pastoral station. The most important routes he indicated were those associated with mustering cattle out of the Macleay to the north of the homestead; mustering cattle at West Kunderang; the long ride across the Bridle Spur to Front Tableland and down the other side into the Apsley; upriver to Reedy Creek and Rozens Creek; and from Riverside to Moona Plains along the three Crawford spurs (Horse Spur, Cattle Spur and Riverside Spur). Les also recalled the location of old yards built by the Lawrences, Wallers and Crawfords.

Like Les O'Neill, Bruce Lockwood, Barry Cohen and Mervyn Cohen all recall mustering the Macleay to the north of East Kunderang and the areas around Front Tableland and Top Creek. Bruce Lockwood also has intimate knowledge of the Carrai Tableland, gained through his long period of association with Long Flat – the neighbouring property to Kunderang on its eastern margin. The mustering tracks recalled by Les have also been confirmed by other Kunderang pastoral workers of an earlier generation, such as John McRae and Cliff Faint, who worked on Kunderang in the 1950s and late 1940s respectively.

Jeff O'Keefe's recollections revolve around mustering Alan Youdale's country in the 1960s, and are intermingled with his more recent experiences, with Maurice Goodwin and Ken O'Keefe, mustering cattle out of Oxley Wild Rivers National Park for the former NPWS in the early 1990s. This pattern of mustering took him from the headwaters of Kunderang Brook all the way north to its junction with the Macleay. Like Les, Ken recalls the locations of yards and overnight camps at Left Hand, Trap Yard, Iron Bark, Cedar Creek, and huts at Bird's Nest, Sunderland's (Middle Hut), Youdale's and Dyson's. The act of telling these mustering paths and representing them on maps produced recollections and memories that, for him, are intimately tied to his understanding of the landscape.

It was the mouth of Small's Creek. It was about '65 and it was very dry. There wasn't much water in Kunderang Brook but there was a little puddle of water at the mouth of Small's Creek, about 8 or 10 inches deep and we had a pretty good mob of cattle we were bringing up. We were going to pull the weaners off the land to try and give the cows a better go – it was getting pretty dry and it was sort of getting to the stage that if we didn't do something we'd start to lose some cows. So we were bringing them up there and Alan was riding along on a horse he used to call 'the Donk'. He had a big loose rein and he bent down to look up under the tea trees at Small's Creek to see whether any cattle had gone up the creek or not. We'd had a pretty good mob of cattle and they'd all walked through this puddle of water and when he went to straighten up a tea tree limb poked him in the ribs and half pushed him off the horse. Before he could regain his reins, he only got one rein gathered up, and all that did was circle the Donk round and round and he'd half fallen off, and he nearly got back on the horse, and the Donk was still going round and round in a circle. When he had almost gotten back in the saddle, the limb poked him in the ribs again and pushed him off. He couldn't hang on any longer and he fell off – flop – fell on his butt in this puddle of water. It was dirty green slimy water that the cattle had all walked through, and I couldn't help but laugh. And I never forget he got up and he wasn't real happy about it and I couldn't help but laugh. There were some pretty funny things that did happen. Little simple things like that, but they were funny at the time (interview, 1 March 2001).

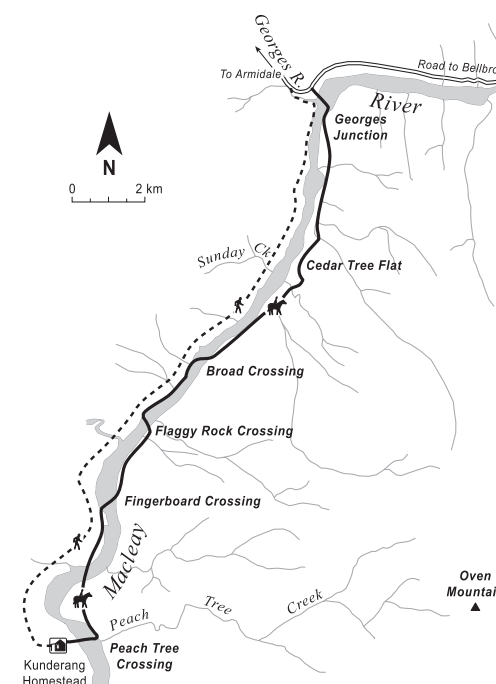


FIGURE 6.6 Walking and horse-riding pathways between the East Kunderang homestead, Georges Creek and Bellbrook were an important aspect of the landscape biographies of the women who were interviewed.

WOMEN'S LANDSCAPE BIOGRAPHY

Unlike the men who had worked and mustered on Kunderang and neighbouring properties, Christine Kim chose to mark the pathways between Bellbrook mission and Georges Creek as important linear storylines in her landscape biography. Although Kim and Irene Lockwood were the only women who chose to be involved in mapping their oral history, this raises tantalising questions about gender differences in mapping memories of Kunderang. It is likely that this reflects the different working lives of men and women after the 1950s at Kunderang, when the property itself became largely a masculine space. Aboriginal women valued their time at the Georges Creek

'holiday camp' where they were beyond the surveillance of Bellbrook mission managers.

Irene Lockwood also recalled the pathway that linked Georges Creek with Kunderang as an important path in her landscape biography.

Georges Creek ... that's where we all used to come down from Bellbrook for a holiday ... everybody would meet there at Georges Creek and they used to have good time. There would be a camp-fire and singing and story-telling. The old people used to come from Armidale, everywhere ... they used to have their holidays there too. They used to build these big tin huts, tin camps. When we were young girls, and Bruce was working at Kunderang, we used to walk up to Kunderang from Georges Creek with our aunties. We just walked along and went up, no horse, just walking and fishing and going along (interview, 21 March 2001).

This track would have also been an important pathway for Thelma McDonnell, who often had to make the journey between Georges Creek and Kunderang on horseback.

It is possible to represent all of these mustering tracks and pathways, along with the locations of huts and yards, on a map of the area now covered by Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. This map (Figure 6.5) illustrates the patterns of pastoral land use in the Kunderang Gorges at a landscape scale. A visual picture is conjured of generations of history lived in and through the landscape of the gorges. This map also demonstrates that the area now managed as 'wilderness' has had a long history of thorough infiltration by Aboriginal people, cattle and pastoralists that has played a fundamental role in forming the landscape.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF MUSTERING IN THE GORGES

After recording oral histories on audiotape and mapping people's recollections of moving through and to particular places in the landscape, visits to some of these sites were arranged, often in the company of the individuals who had discussed the history and contemporary importance of the site. These 'story-treks', coupled with the detailed landscape biographies, form the basis for the following discussion of the 'archaeology' of mustering in

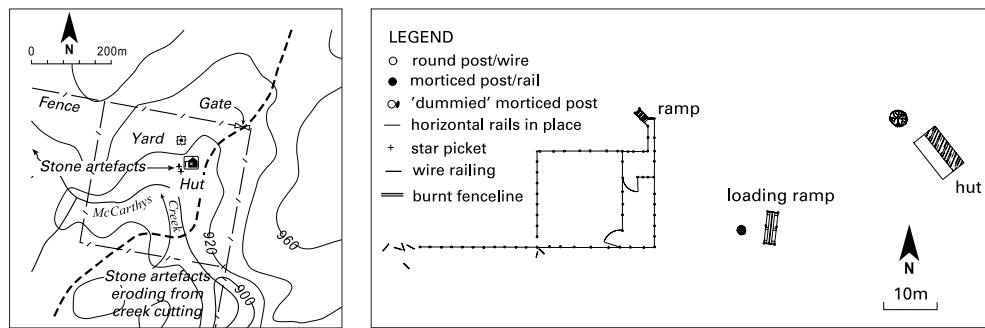


FIGURE 6.7 (left) Site plan, Front Tableland ('Happyland').

FIGURE 6.8 (right) Detailed site plan showing yards and hut at Front Tableland.

the Kunderang ravines. The archaeological traces associated with mustering in the gorge country consists of clearings and huts, and the remains of mustering camps and yards. As indicated above, mustering camps with yards formed an important focus of the work of mustering in the gorges.

I accompanied a team of consultants which had been engaged by the former NPWS to record and provide works documentation for the three Kellion-period hut sites (see Chapter 4). These had been identified as important places during oral history mapping, and all were relatively inaccessible except by helicopter. My account of the archaeology of these three sites draws on their report (Jill Sheppard Heritage Consultants 2001b) and my own site recordings. Several other sites were visited and recorded during this field trip in November 2001 and others during the same year. This part of the chapter summarises those results to show the range of material remains that are associated with mustering camps and yards, remote from a pastoral head station, which act as the foci for oral histories recorded with former station workers.

My objective when recording these sites was to document and record the material evidence associated both with pre-contact Aboriginal uses of the site, as well as any pastoral infrastructure that remained. Informants greatly assisted in identifying and fleshing out many of the details of the use and function of both places and material objects that remained at them. Most of these site visits were made under time constraints, and visibility at all sites was variable. While this does not constitute a 'complete' survey of these sites, this method was considered to be appropriate to this study, which was as interested in the 'sites' themselves, as the way in which they were linked by both stories and physical pathways to other places in the Gorge country.

'HAPPY LAND': FRONT TABLELAND

Front Tableland (or 'Happy Land' as it was euphemistically known) is a clearing at the top of one of the spurs that formed one of the main travel routes from the Kunderang ravines up to the tablelands and on to Moona Plains. A hut and yards was built here some time prior to the 1890s, probably by the Fitzgeralds or during the Crawford period of East Kunderang. When Les O'Neill first went to Front Tableland in the 1960s, there was a cleared horse paddock and a very dilapidated set of yards, which Alec McDonnell and he repaired. The Fitzgeralds' hut was not extant, but there was a slab-lined well and a bark lean-to that had been built by George Cohen. They would muster at Front Tableland for up to two weeks at a time, then return to East Kunderang homestead to change horses and take a few days



FIGURE 6.9 (left) Front Tableland from the air.



FIGURE 6.10 (centre) The Kellion-built mustering hut at Front Tableland replaced an earlier hut built prior to 1890.



FIGURE 6.11 (right) Detail of the yards at Front Tableland.

rest before returning to finish the job. Up to 100 head of cattle would be mustered for branding from the creeks and gorges into the yards at Front Tableland before being driven down into the valley to the bullock paddock at Kunderang Creek.

When the property was under the management of Kellion Estates, a new mustering hut was built at Front Tableland in 1967. This timber-framed corrugated-iron building is located on a small rise above a large fenced paddock and stockyards.

The fabric of the yards at Front Tableland document over 100 years of progressive alterations to their function and form, although the remains are the most substantially intact of the Fitzgerald period stockyards in Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. Les O'Neill explains:

Well there had been a fairly big set of split-rail and post yards. When they'd fallen down and they repaired them, they used the old rails again, put some new posts in but mainly all new posts and the old rails. And I think it was either three or four yards, it wasn't a bad set of yards in those times ... there was a receiving yard and a drafting yard, which they used to use for the branding yard. I don't know whether there were only the three or four yards there. There might have been four yards (interview, 27 Feb 2001).

The yards show evidence for several periods of construction. The earliest parts are constructed of split rails and posts, while later round posts and rails either replaced or were wired onto the earlier ones. The final phases of repair, most likely dating to the Kellion period, show the use of star pickets (again often wired against earlier posts) with wire and metal railing. The yards' layout is now difficult to interpret, but appears to have been three of four holding yards plus a receiving and drafting yard as explained by O'Neill.

ABORIGINAL ARCHAEOLOGY AT FRONT TABLELAND

Aboriginal stone artefacts are exposed in two locations at Front Tableland: in the dripline of the hut itself, and in exposures along the creek that runs through the block. These artefacts occur in eroding clay exposures and indicate that there are areas of potential archaeological deposit at this site. Artefacts noted were predominantly flakes and debitage (flaking debris) on chert and mudstone. Les O'Neill recalls George Cohen constructing a bark shelter at the site, which although no longer extant, relates to a long tradition of Aboriginal people, and then settlers after them, constructing bark shelters in this area:

every night after you had your tea, old George had his little bark hut that he built there and he'd stroll off with his little bag of flour and away he'd go and cook a damper for the



FIGURE 6.12 Aboriginal man removing bark from tree, Port Macquarie area, c 1905. (Courtesy State Library of New South Wales: BCP 04736)

next day, and come back with it the next morning. No camp oven or anything, he'd just cook it in the ashes. You would see him going off with [just] a bag of flour and a billy-can of water (interview, 27 Feb 2001).

The use of bark in the construction of huts and shelters was widespread amongst Aboriginal communities on the north coast. Although they varied in size and sturdiness of construction, they were generally built on a frame of saplings, with cured bark sheets lashed on to the frame (Morris 1989: 77). These shelters were reputedly adopted widely by cedar getters, and variations on them often formed the first huts in which early pioneering Macleay

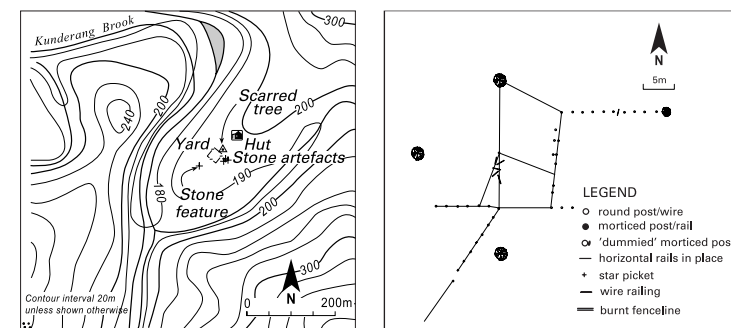


FIGURE 6.13 (left) Site plan, Left Hand.

FIGURE 6.14 (centre) Detailed site plan showing the remains of the yards at Left Hand.

FIGURE 6.15 (right) Left Hand from the air.

pastoralists would live, while awaiting construction of a more elaborate dwelling. The use and method of cutting sheets of bark was probably one of the earliest technologies adopted from Aboriginal people by European settlers in this area. The shepherds' huts at Kunderang during the 1840s and 1850s, and the early mustering huts at Front Tableland, Middle Yard, Left Hand and Top Creek were probably built in a similar manner.

LEFT HAND

The yards at Left Hand and Middle Yards were part of the mustering round associated with mustering cattle in Kunderang Brook:

[We would] generally work from the bottom up ... from the homestead up as far as Left Hand and then they'd shut all the cattle in the bullock paddock when they were mustering. Everything that they wanted to keep from up that way all went in the Bullock Paddock. And we'd move from there to the Bullock Paddock. At Left Hand there were no yards or paddock. And even at the Bullock Paddock there was only a paddock which wasn't even good enough to catch a horse in. And so we'd muster into the Bullock Paddock and then take everything from there down to the house to brand. And then when we got up to about Blacks Camp we'd do from Blacks Camp and muster up to the Middle Yard, because they had a yard there and a small paddock for your horses. And we'd just brand everything up there and from up Youdale's hut down they'd all brand at the Middle Yard. Everything else other than the Middle Yard were all branded at the Kunderang homestead (Les O'Neill interview, 27 Feb 2001).

When Les went to Left Hand in the 1960s, the hut and the yards, constructed for the Fitzgeralds, had fallen down. These were rebuilt during the Kellion period, at which time the hut at Left Hand was also built. Like the one at Front Tableland, this corrugated iron-clad hut was built on a timber frame with a gabled roof. The hut and stockyards are located in a paddock of approximately 4 hectares at the base of a prominent spur on the Kunderang Brook. The stockyards, approximately 50 metres south-west of the hut, show considerable evidence of alterations and additions.

Jeff O'Keefe, who was employed by the former NPWS to muster wild Kunderang cattle out of the park in 1994, recalls the yards as they existed at that time:

It consisted of two main yards and there was a little forcing pen that was put on the race with a loading ramp. Well that was only built in latter years when these other boys were able to get trucks up in there. The truck job wouldn't have started until probably the late '70s or early '80s or something like that when they first would have put a truck up in that



FIGURE 6.16 (left) The Kellion-built mustering hut at Left Hand.



FIGURE 6.17 (right) Detail of the yards at Left Hand.

country there. They built a rough-and-ready loading ramp and a little forcing pen in one of the yards that was there but, it was quite serviceable, not good, but it did the trick OK.

It would have been in its heyday a real good yard. It would have held any cattle they ever put in it. As I said it was an old yard when we went there and we kept poking a rail in it and patching it up and it did the job well but it was ... in its heyday it would have been hard to build because they had to use hand tools for everything in those times, no tractors or machinery to help with building. As far as the workmanship of it, it would have been a really good yard. It had swinging gates and they had latches for drafting ... that's far ahead of slip rails which most of those bush yards in those early times had. But in our time they had boards in the gates, which probably were put on when Kellion came there, because they brought in sawn timber to build the hut (interview, 2 March 2001).

The yards were damaged by fire in 2001, leaving a charcoal line of post-holes where the fence had stood. Like the yards at Front Tableland, there is evidence of at least four phases of fence construction: in the use of split-post and rail; round posts with wire (sometimes fixed to old split posts); the use of wire railing; and star pickets (again, sometimes wired to round or split posts). The final phase of construction with star pickets has also used a standing tree trunk as a post.

ABORIGINAL ARCHAEOLOGY AT LEFT HAND

Flaked stone artefacts, as at Front Tableland, were found in exposures around the tank-stand near the hut and around the yards. The artefacts are scattered across a series of three small rises, and although surface visibility is limited by thick grass, almost all exposures contain scattered stone artefacts of a density up to 20 per square metre. The artefacts consisted predominantly of flakes and debitage made on quartz, chert and chalcedony. A scarred tree adjacent to the yards appears to have been cut using a stone axe to make a coolamon or shield. A small rectangular stone feature located near the scarred trees may be the remains of a hut base.

MIDDLE YARD

Photographs dated to 1912 and around 1920 document the existence of early slab-sided, shingle-roofed huts at Middle Yard. These were removed in 1967 when Kellion built the third Kellion-period mustering hut at Middle Yard. Like the others, it is timber-framed with a gable roof and corrugated-iron cladding, and is associated with a set of stockyards and a

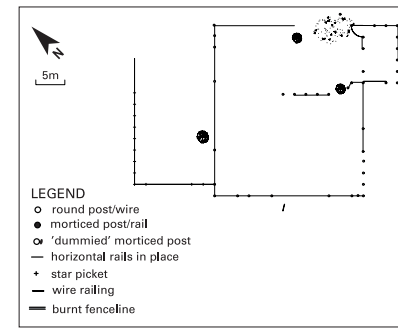
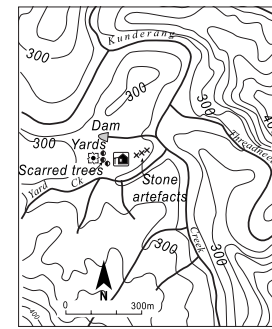


FIGURE 6.18 (left) Site plan, Middle Yard.

FIGURE 6.19 (centre) Detailed site plan showing the remains of the yards at Middle Yard.

FIGURE 6.20 (right) Middle Yard from the air.

small dam that were originally constructed during the Fitzgerald period but substantially altered during the McDonnell and Kellion periods.

The site is located near the base of a spur on a flat clearing on Kunderang Brook, approximately 22 kilometres south of East Kunderang homestead. When Les O'Neill visited the site in 1967, the huts had fallen down and the yards were in poor condition:

at the Middle Yard the old hut that Sunderland had there had all fallen down. They had no paddock that would hold the cattle in, it was only the horse paddock. You would muster there for two or three days and shut the cattle in the yard and generally Alec could leave them that extra day and when you went to get them they'd be out of the yard. [The cattle would] break the yard down and go, and you would have to start again. So then we repaired that yard and we built another paddock to hold cattle in. When we renewed it, where we had to put new rails on we only put round rails because the place was almost sold at that stage and it was just a patch up job (interview, 27 February 2001)

ABORIGINAL ARCHAEOLOGY AT MIDDLE YARD

Like at the other two hut sites, flaked-stone artefacts were located in scours near the base of the hut's tank-stand and around the yards. Artefacts also occurred on exposures on a series of four low rises that separate the hut from the creek. Stone artefacts include some retouched flakes and cores, in addition to debitage made on chert, chalcedony and mudstone. A series of six scarred trees show evidence of having been cut with a metal axe and may relate to the construction of the Sunderland or Fitzgerald period huts, or the construction of shelters by Aboriginal people in the historic period. Four of the six trees are still alive. Apparently percussively flaked bottle glass (see further discussion in Chapter 8) dating to around 1900 was noted at the site.

RUSDENS CREEK CAMPSITE

In addition to mustering huts with yards, a number of areas that contained just yards in the gorges formed the basis for makeshift mustering camps, which were used when mustering cattle out of the surrounding creeks for several days at a time. Les O'Neill and Maurice Goodwin took me to one such camp at Rusdens Creek, where the Crawfords (who owned Moona Plains, which abutted the western boundary of Kunderang on the tablelands) built a set of branding yards down at the base of the spur some time prior to the 1950s. This camp replaced an earlier pair of huts and yard at Riverside, which may have been built before the turn of the twentieth century:



FIGURE 6.21 (left) The Kellion-built mustering hut at Middle Yard.

FIGURE 6.22 (right) Detail of Aboriginal flaked-stone artefacts at Middle Yard.

There was only one yard there when the Crawfords were there, but there's two yards there now and the paddock has fallen down. The Crawfords only had the small horse paddock and one yard. The yard was built like a pig sty. It had only little small rails in it and every time a rail would break they'd put another one in and the cattle couldn't see through it – that's how they kept them in there. But all they had to do was make a hole and they'd knock the whole yard down ... you've never seen yards like it ... (Les O'Neill interview, 27 Feb 2001).

The site is located on gently sloping ground at the base the 'Riverside' spur on a bend in the Apsley River:

There were three spurs that the Crawfords had, they had the 'Riverside spur', which they didn't travel very much. The older Crawfords used to travel it all the time, I think that's where they [NPWS] have the road down now. They had the one they call the 'Horse spur', that's where the walking track is and they had another one they called the 'Cattle spur'. It was a longer spur but it wasn't much of a climb for the cattle [because] it was on the side of the spur instead of on top of it ... (Les O'Neill interview, 27 Feb 2001).

The site contains a small fenced paddock and set of timber stockyards and the remains of domestic materials associated with camping activities further up the incline from the yards. The yards had been ingeniously constructed using the trunks of several conveniently placed trees as posts. At least two periods of construction are evident: the first includes the use of round posts and wire; the second the use of star pickets. The yard also possessed a roughly circular branding yard with a crush (constructed more recently than the branding yard itself) and a sorting yard.

During my visit to the Rusdens Creek campsite in 2001, I recorded the yards and the remains of camping equipment stored there. This included billies and kerosene lanterns stored underneath a tree, as well as other domestic items such as a meat safe and the remains of tarpaulin stretched over posts. Also discovered were shovel handles and a sledgehammer head. Les remembers the hearth being used for cooking, and a 'fish smoker' built by Max Duval into the side of the hill – although only a depression remains in the location indicated by O'Neill. The remains of posts, some of which had been used for firewood, and a bed frame and tarpaulin, were scattered across the site.

ABORIGINAL ARCHAEOLOGY AT RUSDENS CREEK

Just above the yard at Rusdens Creek is a natural spring, around which is a low-density scatter (less than 5 per square metre) of flaked stone artefacts. These include several large multi-platform chert cores and flakes. The spring and the flat clearing near a spur would

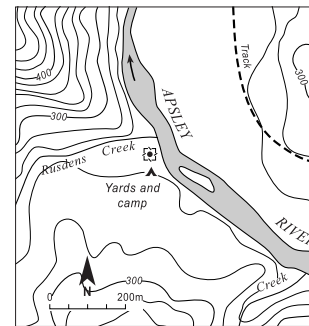


FIGURE 6.23 (left) Site plan, Rusdens Creek.

FIGURE 6.24 (right) Rusdens Creek is located on the Apsley River at the base of the spur shown in this photograph.

have made this a favourable location for camping by Aboriginal people in the past. The site has been disturbed by cattle trampling and was not recorded in any further detail.

RIVERSIDE HUTS

As mentioned earlier, the camp at Rusdens Creek replaced an earlier set of huts that had fallen down by the 1960s when Les first visited the site. The hut sites have now been incorporated into a grassed picnic area with interpretive shelter, managed by DEC. They are marked by a pair of low stone chimney mounds. The area has been heavily modified and few artefacts that might be associated with the huts could be located. The remnants of a large set of split-post and rail yards, also built by the Crawfords, are nearby. These yards were probably built before 1900, and were in a dilapidated state in 2001. Les noted:

FIGURE 6.25 Detailed site plan showing the remains of the yards and mustering camp at Rusdens Creek.

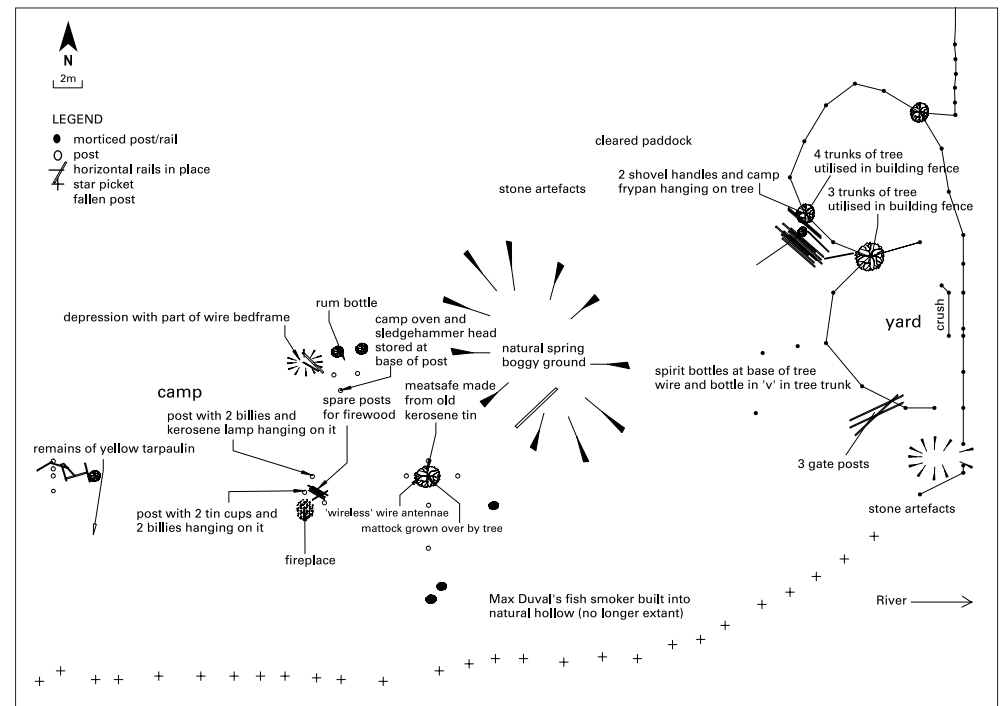




FIGURE 6.26 (left) The yards at Rusdens Creek.
FIGURE 6.27 (centre) Billies and a kerosene lamp stored on top of a post used to construct temporary shelter, Rusdens Creek.
FIGURE 6.28 (right) A frying pan and shovel handles stored on fence posts, Rusdens Creek.

There was a big set of yards and by the look of them they had a lot of cattle through because they were well worn, you could see where the cattle had been stamping around. They were a big set of cattle yards. What design they were I've got no idea. There were a few rails and things still there when I first went there, but you couldn't even see what design the yard was (interview, 27 Feb 2001).

It is likely that the function of Rusdens Creek camp, as a point on the Apsley for mustering cattle to Moona Plains, replicates the earlier function of the Riverside huts as an outstation for the Crawfords' property. There are reputed to be two scarred trees near these huts that were cut by the Crawford brothers to make bark dishes in the form usually made by Aboriginal people, although the trees could not be found on the day I visited.

OTHER MUSTERING HUTS AND YARDS

Alan Youdale's hut in the headwaters of the Kunderang Brook received substantial conservation work by NPWS in 1992. A site plan showing the hut and its relationship with an earlier hut and set of yards (see Chapter 4) is shown in Figure 6.32. This is one of the earliest huts left standing in the Kunderang Gorges, and is of high regional significance.

Several other isolated yards and hut features both within Oxley Wild Rivers National Park and on private property were once part of the Kunderang lease. Typical of the ephemeral nature of many of sites are the yards that were originally constructed by the Lawrences and Waller, now part of Rowleys Creek pastoral property owned by Les O'Neill. Both Waller and the Lawrences (who had run cattle in the Kunderang Ravines since before 1920) held interests in the area until Les O'Neill purchased the blocks in 1972. Les explains:

Rusdens Creek – that's where we camped all the time to do this top end of it, and then we moved down to Rowleys Creek. There used to be a big horse paddock there and they'd muster everything into there. We haven't got that now we've only got a little horse paddock. But at that stage it was Lawrences that owned it (interview, 27 Feb 2001).

The remains of Lawrence's yards consist of a large roughly rectangular set of yards, which like those at the mustering hut sites in the park demonstrate successive periods of re-use and adaptation. The yards would have originally been of post-and-rail construction, but have since been renewed with round posts and wire, and in some cases, star pickets.

[Near to Reedy Creek] was a set of Waller's yards. There used to be a paddock there but they've gone now ... all fallen down. That was mainly used [during the 1950s and 1960s]

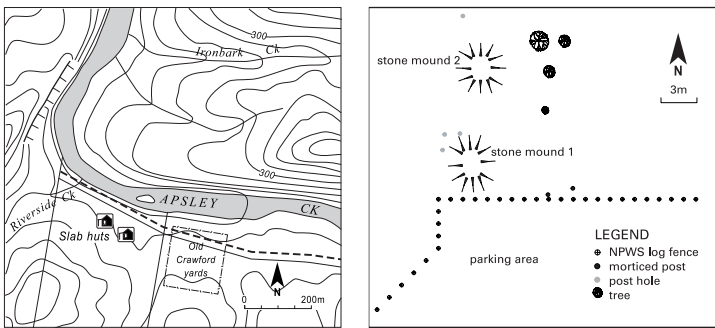


FIGURE 6.29 (left) Site plan, old Crawford huts, Riverside.
FIGURE 6.30 (centre) Detailed site plan showing the remains of the stone chimney mounds that mark the location of the old Crawford huts, Riverside.
FIGURE 6.31 (right) The old Crawford horse paddock, Riverside.

by Larry Asmus. He used to bring his cattle around out of the Muddy [River], the spur that he travelled was too steep to take them up so he'd bring them around to Reedy Creek and camp them in the paddock there overnight and then bring them up the Narrow Neck Spur. On the rail in the main receiving yard there was a stay across the top of the gateways. It had a date carved in it, I'm not certain, but it could have been '1911' or '1917', but some time around then (Les O'Neill interview, 27 Feb 2001).

The site of Waller's yards, constructed just after the turn of the twentieth century, is on a spur above the river approximately 100 metres north of Lawrence's yards. This set of yards now consists of only the remains of ten standing posts with rails and some nearby fallen timbers. It is not possible to interpret the layout of the yards from the remaining physical evidence.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF MUSTERING IN THE KUNDERANG RAVINES: A SUMMARY

There is a pattern and rhythm to the location of yards and huts in the Kunderang Gorges that can only be read and recognised at a particular spatial scale. This pattern would have been the one most easily recognised by the stockmen and women who mustered cattle on Kunderang for over 100 years. Although Kunderang was the head station, yards and huts for mustering teams were placed at strategic points throughout the gorge country, generally on the tablelands near good access spurs. Cleared paddocks would be established around a simple hut and yards. There are three of these huts associated with Kunderang still preserved in Oxley Wild Rivers National Park, although during the Fitzgerald period there were four or five huts.

Further down the hierarchy of places there were numerous, less well frequented yards and paddocks where the mustering team would occasionally camp as they worked their way down the rivers and creeks to find and muster wild cattle. There were no structures built at these locations, although canvas tents were sometimes erected. Often stores of cooking equipment and canvas for shelter were left at these mustering camps. These sites were ephemeral and would be difficult to locate if they were not pin-pointed by someone who has knowledge of working at them, but they demonstrate clearly the system of pastoral land use in the gorge country. As archaeological sites, these places preserve information about the ways of life of former pastoral workers, but taken together with the oral history they build a powerful picture of the pastoral industry as a land-use strategy that was highly adaptable to the varied landscapes of New South Wales.

The scatters of stone artefacts recorded at each of the mustering hut, camp and yard sites most likely represent the remains of successive camping episodes, carried out by small groups of Aboriginal people who moved into the gorge country in the warmer

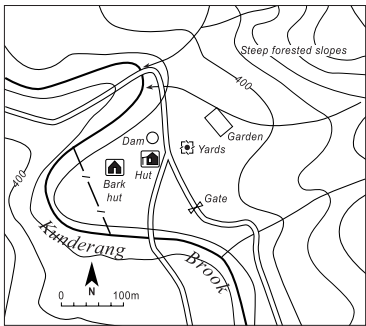


FIGURE 6.32 (left) Site plan of Alan Youdale's hut, Werrikembe National Park.

FIGURE 6.33 (right) Youdale's hut after restoration in 1992.

months. Following the results of Godwin's research on the Macleay, these sites probably date to within the last 2000 years. All sites occur within the contexts suggested by Godwin's model – that is close to watercourses on flat ground or near semi-permanent water sources and good access spurs to the tablelands. Flaked glass pieces and scarred trees with evidence of steel axe marks provide tantalising hints of post-contact use of the sites by Aboriginal people, or the transferral of Aboriginal techniques of hut construction to settler pastoralists. I will return to the significance of the concurrence of pre-contact Aboriginal archaeological sites with pastoral infrastructure later in this chapter.

AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF MOVEMENT

My focus on describing the archaeology of former pastoral mustering camps has taken us some distance from our interest in movement, and routes of travel. I think it is important to make some general points about the archaeology, or physical manifestation, of the tracks and trails that were used as pathways throughout the Kunderang Ravines. These are often recognisable as clearly marked trails, free of vegetation and flattened by the passage of hoof and human traffic. One such trail is illustrated in Figure 6.34, from the album of Alec McDonnell.

Human pathways often make use of trails formed by animals, such as kangaroos and wild horses and cattle, which travel the easiest routes between tableland and river valley floor. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, early pastoralists in search of a route between the valley and tableland discovered Aboriginal footpaths, and cleared tracks that they came to use as stock-routes and roads. There is certainly very good evidence for the continuous use of several of these major trails over 160 years of European settlement.

Tracks and trails are widely recognised to be fragile, with special management needs (Blair et al 2002; Ramsay and Truscott 2002). The 'physicality' or ease of detection of tracks and trails can easily vanish without human use, which is a particular problem in protected areas such as National Parks (Ramsay and Truscott 2002: 36). This presents land management agencies such as DEC with a profound challenge in terms of managing the significance of such heritage items. The continuity of use of these trails, as in the case of the three Crawford Spurs at Riverside, represents a serious step towards conserving their significant fabric. Signposting and interpretive information for tracks and trails represents another. Such challenges will need to continue to be met with innovative solutions to manage the ephemeral nature of many of the routes and trails in question.



FIGURE 6.34 One of the tracks leading from the tableland to Kunderang. Note it is a physically 'cleared' pathway, and as such has an 'archaeology', which, although fragile, means that such places can still be recognised in the landscape. (McDonnell family album, DEC)

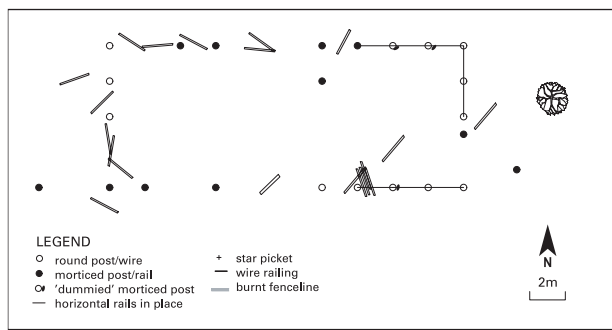
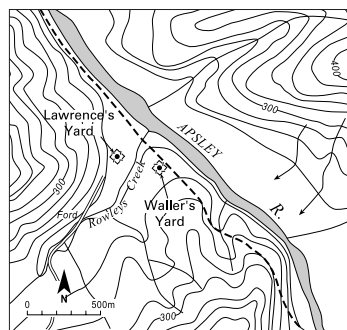
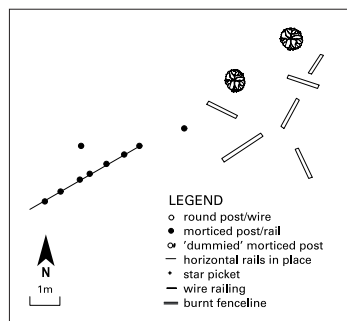


FIGURE 6.35 (top left) Site plan showing location of Waller's and Lawrence's yards at Rowleys Creek.
FIGURE 6.36 (top right) Detailed plan of Lawrence's yards, Rowleys Creek.
FIGURE 6.37 (left) Detailed plan of Waller's yards, Rowleys Creek.



KNOWING THE COUNTRY

The interviews collected for the *Shared Histories* project are rich with places that constitute landscapes of dwelling, working, walking and riding. These landscapes have a personal character, but also reflect wider shared notions of cultural and natural landscapes in the pastoral industry. But some of the stockmen who worked in the country on and surrounding East Kunderang know the landscape from the ground up – the aerial photos and topographic maps, for them, render the landscape new and unintelligible. For these men it is a lived, experienced landscape.

One of the men I interviewed, for example, seemed unsure about the map that depicts the rough country in which he mustered. The map and its series of lines and shadings did not appear to make much sense to him. The names of places along the mustering route seem less important than how long a days ride it was to get from one mustering camp to the next: 'we'd have a short day from there to the foot of the hill'. For some of the men and women interviewed, there was a distinct difference between being able to identify the place on the map, and knowing where the places actually were: 'I'm not too sure about that creek [marked on the map] whether I'm getting tangled up with Reedy Creek and the other creek, but I certainly know where they are'.

MAKING PLACES AT EAST KUNDERANG

For the former pastoral workers and their descendents, the landscape of the Kunderang ravines is understood in profoundly different ways to the way it is now understood by the DEC. Recollections of the country emphasise particular kinds of places, such as clearings on the tablelands and river flats, the river itself, and the ever-important spurs – those escalators of the gorge-lands. The linearity and seasonality of movement between tableland and gorges forms a moving landscape, a construction within which people's memories can be articulated and made to speak in profoundly personal ways.

The relationship between work and people's understanding and appreciation of the landscape of the gorges is of critical importance. Jeff O'Keefe noted when describing a particular creek while he was mapping his landscape biography:

Steep hard creek but amazingly enough we used to have very good luck because the sides were so steep, the cattle wouldn't climb out of them easily. They always used to sidle around the sides and then they'd come down again. Over the time we had a lot of success in it.

Early in the piece we got every beast out of Blacks Camp. Some of the creeks – even Left Hand and Thread Needle – still have got a handful of cattle in them, but Blacks Camp – quite early in the piece we had every beast out of it (interview, 2 March 2001).

Jeff's knowledge of Black's Camp Creek is profoundly phenomenological – his understanding of the creek is as part of a wider, lived and working mustering landscape. There is a relationship here between the movement of people and cattle which is important in understanding the way in which stockmen came to know and appreciate this landscape:

We used to say 'If the cattle can get there, follow that track because you'll get there'. The cattle were wise enough to know that if they couldn't get round the side or over a steep bank or something they wouldn't go, so if the cattle went around a steep incline or something we'd follow their tracks because they knew where they were going. And that proved pretty well all the time. If the cattle didn't want to go there you had to be careful because it was probably too steep, or too shaley or the water was too deep. But a lot of it is probably common sense – if it gets too steep you get off and lead your horse. You don't go scrambling around where you're going to get it busted (Maurice Goodwin interview, 1 March 2001).

Bruce Lockwood echoed this sentiment when he noted, on the courage of Aboriginal people mustering in the Kunderang Gorges, 'where the cattle went, they went'. Indeed, cattle provide a wide range of metaphors for understanding human experience, particularly travel, in the Kunderang ravines. Such observations have been made of pastoralists in other parts of the world (eg Tilley 1999: 51). The use of human/cattle metaphors is shared between both Aboriginal and settler pastoralists. This is part of the shared working language which developed through living and working together in the gorges over 150 years.

The way in which people move about in this highly dissected environment is not only reflected in people's language, but is inscribed on the very landscape itself. The named features in the gorges all focus on spurs and creeks, reflecting the broader pattern of movement both to muster cattle and to move across the land from the tableland to the valley. The landscape is described and named as a working, moving landscape. This in turn represents a profoundly landscape-oriented body of lore, which documents the long history of people and cattle in the gorges.

THE 'SHORT CUT'

For landscape philosopher Michel de Certeau, it is people's interlinked paths and pedestrian movements that form 'real systems whose existence in fact makes up a city' (1984: 97). The history of the city begins at ground level, with peoples' footsteps. In the Kunderang Gorges, it is not pedestrian movement but the movement of horses and riders along pathways, and cattle across their daily and seasonal 'beat', that constitutes the social face of the country. We can inscribe these movements and pathways as lines on maps, but to do so would miss the practices of starting and stopping, walking, crossing rivers, roping and throwing wild cattle, and incidents that occurred along the way (see Pearson and Shanks 2001: 148). De Certeau distinguishes tricks in the 'ways of doing' (1984: xviii), the ways in which people continually subvert the constraints of landscapes.

One such 'trick' is the 'short cut', a frequent inclusion in people's oral histories which stress moving through space, constituting a focal point for the intersection between history, event, people and landscape:

Yes it's not very far from the mouth of Thread Needle [Creek]. Well, actually you don't come out the mouth of Thread Needle with cattle, you short cut over a bank and cross to Middle Yard. And it's a steep little climb up and a steep little climb down and, in the dark, at night coming back with tired cattle, it was a great place where years ago they used to lose a lot

of them. So we decided we'd take the portable yards, to a place where there was a bit of a track where they used to cut posts years ago. We would just put them in to the portable yards without the hassle of losing them or widening the yard and we'd go back next morning, either take the 'Blitz' [truck] over and put them on, or drive them across next morning when we had plenty of time (Maurice Goodwin interview, 1 March 2001).

Like the short cut, the detail of embodied landscape biographies can be lost in the broad stroke of the line on the page. The Kunderang narratives seem to support Gibson's 'theory of reversible occlusion', which describes the way in which the environment is known by humans along a path of observation of surfaces which move in and out of view in a particular order along a pathway or route of travel (1979: 198; see discussion in Ingold 2000: 238). These stories relive and recreate the landscape by recalling the routes along which it was experienced and known. The 'ways-of-doing' associated with mustering in the Kunderang ravines form part of the collective experience from which former pastoral workers constitute their sense of collective identity, and sense of place (eg papers in Feld and Basso 1996). 'Places not only are; they happen' (Casey 1996: 13).

The stories, a series of named places linked by narratives, pay testament to an involvement with the landscape (Tilley 1994: 27; Pearson and Shanks 2001: 135). The constraints formed by this rugged, dissected landscape, the river itself, and the shared experiences of huts and mustering camps form the basis for the active creation of the landscape of the Kunderang ravines. Riding and walking constitutes a kind of spatial acting out which pathways of movement, and the constraints formed by the landscape, choreograph. Living and working in the Kunderang ravines means an active and constant engagement with the landscape. For the former Kunderang pastoral workers, to travel the landscape is to 'remember it into being' (Pearson and Shanks 2001: 138).

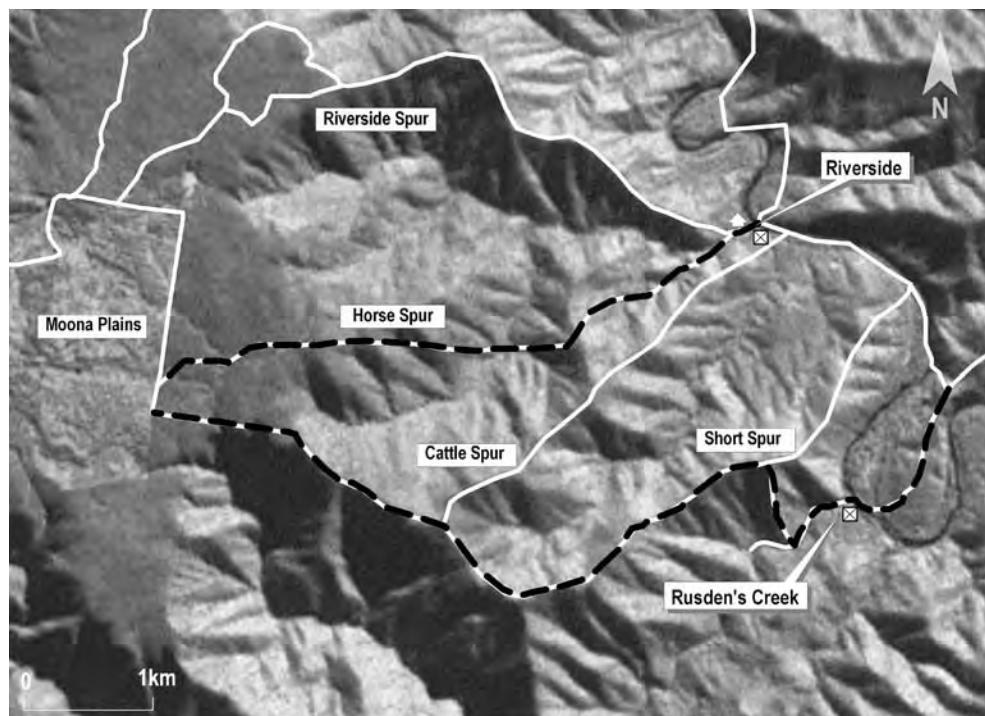


FIGURE 6.38 The 'short' and 'horse' spurs: short cuts used by the Crawfords to travel between Moona Plains, Rusdens Creek and Riverside.

'LOOKING AFTER COUNTRY': PASTORALISM AND NATURAL LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

Another feature of the oral histories collected for the Kunderang case-study is the detailed information on land management and land-use history that emerge. Discussing fire as a land management strategy, Ken O'Keefe provides quite specific seasonal information on fire management in the gorges:

It depends on the country – whether it was the sunny sides or the shady sides. Or the seasons ... all those things come into whether you can or can't burn, and whether you should burn. Or how heavy it's been grazed – in some country sometimes you can burn every second year on the sunny sides if it doesn't get grazed heavily enough. But other times, on the shady sides, you might get five or six years and not get a fire because you've got to wait for the season to be right to get it dry enough to burn those shady sides.

Alan was always poking around. The fact that he smoked meant he always had a box of matches in his pocket and if there was a task that needed burning, it got burnt. I thought Alan managed his fires very well. And the amount of cattle he used to run dictated that very well. He used to run a lot of cattle.

Alan was of the same belief as I was, that if you didn't get it burnt by Christmas time you shouldn't burn it in that country ... [because] it misses out on the growth a lot of times. You don't get enough growth on your country before winter strikes again. And then you leave your country a bit raw and open to storms and things like that. I mean, you can never avoid some wash. Heavy rains aren't so bad, but those storms where you get a deluge in half an hour ... if they get up on a side they can really wreak havoc as far as erosion and that sort of thing goes.

If you can try and keep a bit of grass on your country or get it to grow back as quick as possible, that's the answer, so that you hold your country a little bit. So you break [the fire] up. You break your easy spots up and probably your flats where it's a bit open and the sun shines on it. You can get those burnt early and then as you get into the hills and to the timber, well of course it gets later and later that you can burn those. When you burn later you're getting closer to your rain, so the ground lies raw for less time (interview, 1 March 2001).

It is clear that O'Keefe and many other pastoralists who have lived and worked in Oxley Wild Rivers National Park understand pastoral land-use practices as land conservation. To O'Keefe, country that has been looked after is country that has been fired regularly and thoughtfully, has been grazed to keep down weeds and keep the tracks and trails clear – it is country that is occupied by both people and cattle. In addition to being a potential source of long-term observations on environmental change, which has been previously recognised by DEC (see Kingsford 1999; Roberts 1999; Goodall 1999), the memories of land-use and conservation practices employed by former Aboriginal and settler pastoralists connects in fundamental ways with their perception of environmental health and landscape.

A 'SHARED' LANDSCAPE?

I want to conclude this chapter by pursuing the comparison of pre-contact Aboriginal and post-contact pastoral landscapes somewhat more aggressively than I have in the first part of this book – as an understanding of these links is fundamental to my interpretation of the shared heritage of the pastoral industry. Throughout this chapter I have discussed former pastoralists' interest in the management of landscape using fire, in trails through the country, and in the stories with which they remember the country into being. Such interests and concerns are clearly the same issues which Aboriginal people consider critical land management questions. Compare Bill Cohen's account of travel from Georges Creek to a bora ground high on the tableland with those travels recounted by settler pastoral workers earlier in this chapter:

With a packhorse now loaded with tucker, Dad and I set out, heading for a bora ground ... high on the tabletop of the Bully Creek range. To get to this bora ground we travelled [past] what is known as the Carrai Tableland, then dropping down into Kunderang Creek. Arriving here late afternoon in the small creek known as Limestone, here we made our main camp. The following morning we rode up to this ... bora ground (Cohen 1987: 92).

This route would have been a familiar one, albeit with a radically different purpose, for any of the former pastoral workers who were interviewed as part of this project. I think the connection between Dreaming/ceremonial trails and mustering tracks can be taken further. All of the oral histories recounted by former pastoral workers formed moving narratives or storylines. Like Jeremy Beckett (1978), I do not think it is too much of a stretch of the imagination to see such storylines as the pastoral equivalent of Dreaming songlines. Indeed, Rumsey's (2001: 23) generalised description of Australian Aboriginal Dreamings – based on Strehlow's work with the Aranda – could also be read as a description of the relationship between pastoral narrative and place:

People ... are linked to country through these creative acts ... through the connections among places that are established by the movements of the travelling dreamings. Knowledge of those creative acts, places, songs, and stories is itself localised, owned by the people for those places, as are the languages that were left in their country.

Like Dreaming songlines (Rumsey 2001), pastoral narratives are 'rhizome-like' (after Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Deleuze and Guattari developed this concept as part of a theory of 'nomadology' that describes the predisposition of the 'West' to be dominated by arborescent or 'tree-like' models of thought in which fixed, hierarchical relationships are emphasised. Rhizomes or rootstocks are non-hierarchical, forming a system in which offshoots from a rootstock can reconnect at any point. Rumsey (2001; see also Benterrak et al 1996) perceives within this model a way of conceptualising Aboriginal understandings of landscape, particularly those encapsulated within the framework of 'Dreaming'.

One of the defining features of the Dreaming is a set of non-hierarchical relationships that were developed between Dreaming ancestors and the places they interacted with and created as they moved along defined tracks across country. Aboriginal people own prescribed sections of a Dreaming songline for their own country: 'People know the story for a particular segment of the journey within their own country. It cannot be otherwise, because in an important sense the country is the story' (Rumsey 2001: 24).

For the Aboriginal and settler pastoralists who I interviewed about the Macleay, those sections of the story which described their relationships with place were equally prescribed by their own and their forebears' creative movement through the gorge country. Often one interviewee would refer me to another once we had mapped up to what they understood to be the edge of *their* storyline or country. Land ownership cross-cuts these former pastoral workers' appreciation of who owns the right to speak for various bits of country. This right is not so much constituted by land ownership, as by the creative power of people's actions within it. The country, for both Aboriginal Dreamings and pastoral narratives, is the story.

CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of the landscape biographies of former Kunderang pastoral workers and their families reveals an unfamiliar landscape – of spurs and ridges, clearings, huts and creeks. These places form the backdrop for incidents that focus on the working lives of mustering teams and their families. By riding and walking along familiar pathways and mustering routes, pastoral workers and their families created a habitual sense of being-in-the-landscape, while simultaneously creating that landscape. The former Kunderang

pastoral workers were actively engaged in making the landscape of the Kunderang ravines, in the same way in which the landscape was making them. As French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty noted, 'the experience of our own body teaches us to embed space in existence' (1962: 171). I would add to this the reverse, that the experiences of our own body also teach us to embed *existence in space*.

The moving landscapes of the Kunderang ravines form one example of the rich diversity of phenomenological landscapes that exist as part of the pastoral heritage of New South Wales. An analysis of the way in which pre- and post-contact archaeological sites are distributed across the landscape demonstrates the way in which the activities of settler and Aboriginal pastoralists 'mapped on' to much earlier patterns of movement and occupation of the Kunderang ravines. This has important implications for the way in which we view the pastoral history in this area – as something which is intimately related to and 'learned from' Aboriginal people.

In a very real sense, Kunderang provides an example of the fundamental entanglement of Aboriginal and settler histories on the New South Wales pastoral frontier, problematising the distinction between Aboriginal and settler heritage in Australia. I pushed this line of argument to its logical extreme in the final part of this chapter, arguing for the fundamental link between Aboriginal and pastoral understandings of the landscape, and suggesting a causal link between Aboriginal Dreamings and the use of ceremonial pathways and pastoral narrative forms. In drawing this comparison it has not been my intention to diminish the uniqueness and primacy of Aboriginal people's relationship to land, but instead to demonstrate the deep, shared connections between Aboriginal and pastoral landscapes in this area.

The 'otherness' with which Aboriginal people have been presented in the past provides a barrier to reconciling the entangled histories of black and white in Australia. Understanding this relationship between settlers' and Aboriginal Australians' views of the landscape means not only seeing historic heritage as Aboriginal heritage, but that settler Australians must understand Aboriginal heritage as intimately related to who they are as contemporary Australians.

What I am advocating is certainly not an excuse for the appropriation of Indigenous heritage by settlers – this sharing of heritage can only occur where Aboriginal people are willing for this to occur. Instead, reading these deep connections between settler and Aboriginal understandings of the landscape should form the basis for a new-found mutual respect for both those points of similarity and difference in the contemporary and past lifeworlds of Aboriginal and settler Australia.

The landscape heritage of the pastoral industry at East Kunderang forms the basis for an alternate, shared reading of the history of the place, and an explanation for the profoundly emotional exchanges that occurred at the stakeholders' workshop (discussed earlier in beginning of Chapter 4). Rather than the picture of alternate settler and Aboriginal histories that were presented in Chapters 4 and 5, what has emerged through this chapter's phenomenological or experiential approaches to landscape biographies is a history in which the lives of Aboriginal and settler pastoralists and their families were thoroughly intertwined. This landscape-scale approach to the pastoral heritage of the East Kunderang demonstrates the mutual attachments of both Aboriginal and settler Australians to pastoral heritage in New South Wales, and provides a case-study in the shared histories of the pastoral industry which has potential application throughout Australia and in other settler societies.



part 3

DENNAWAN ABORIGINAL RESERVE,
CULGOA NATIONAL PARK

CHAPTER 7

Dennawan



FIGURE 7.1 The Culgoa River, Culgoa National Park.

In April 1996, 15 615 hectares of land in the counties of Narran and Culgoa on the upper Culgoa River in north-western New South Wales were proclaimed as Culgoa National Park under the state's *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. This land had been two pastoral stations, Cawwell and Byerawering. A third adjoining pastoral station, Burban Grange, was purchased by NPWS in 1998, extending the area of the park to 22 430 hectares. The 42 800-hectare Culgoa Floodplain National Park, managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, adjoins the park on its north-western boundary.

Culgoa National Park was established primarily to conserve rare coolibah woodland and open grassland communities along the Culgoa River that are otherwise poorly represented in the state. This includes possibly the largest contiguous tract of coolibah woodland remaining in New South Wales, and characteristic portions of northern New South Wales grasslands (NPWS 2001b: 3). The western section of the park conserves brigalow and

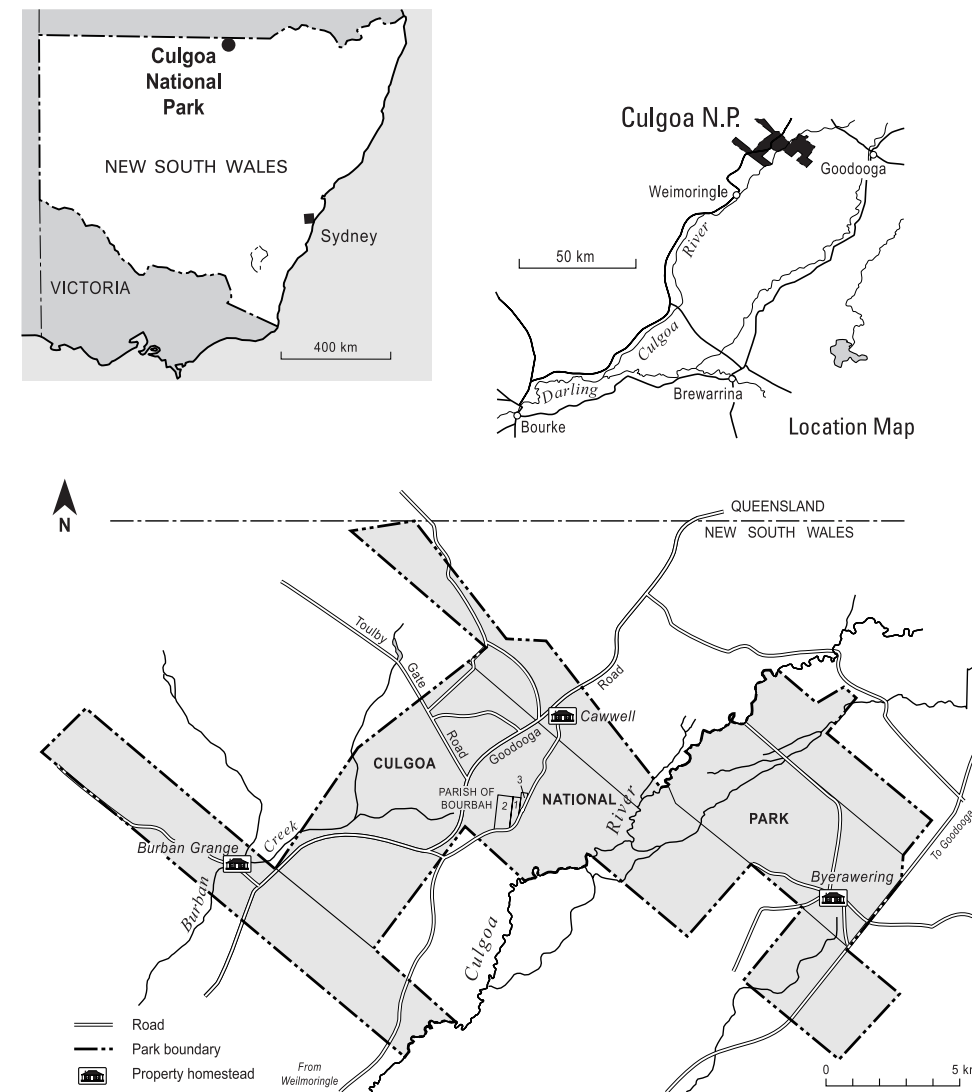


FIGURE 7.2 Culgoa National Park is composed of three former pastoral properties: Cawwell, Byerawering and Burban Grange.

gidgee woodlands – communities that have been progressively cleared or modified through agricultural and grazing activities in other areas of the state. These vegetation areas support a number of animal species that are threatened in New South Wales, including the Australian bustard, grey falcon, painted honey-eater and koala (NPWS 2001b). The natural heritage values of the area are considered to be very high, and the diversity of the natural features of the park earned the World Wildlife Fund's 'New reserve of the year' award for the best addition to Australia's conservation reserves in 1997.

Straddling part of the southern border of the park, between two paddocks known locally as Bourah (or Bowrah) and Tatala, lies the former Aboriginal Reserve of Dennawan. Dennawan first came to the notice of the New South Wales Government as an important place to the local Aboriginal community in the early 1970s, when the Western Lands Commission undertook a survey and two site visits to Dennawan to locate the reserve and its burial ground. The Western Lands Commission, the Aboriginal

Lands Trust of New South Wales and the former National Parks and Wildlife Service's anthropologist Howard Creamer in December surveyed further in 1977, after calls to have the reserve vested in the Lands Trust on behalf of the local Aboriginal community.

The Western Lands Commission thought 'no significance was placed on the reserve as being either an important burial or initiation ground but rather a place where Aboriginal people had lived for a time' (Western Lands Commission to Aboriginal Lands Trust of NSW, 20 January 1977; AHIMS file 9-1-6). Creamer, however, noted in his report that Aboriginal people wanted Dennawan to be protected and freehold title to the surrounding area be given so that it could pass back into the management of local Aboriginal people (Creamer nd, AHIMS file 9-1-6). A recommendation was made that the place be declared an 'Aboriginal Place' under the state's *National Parks and Wildlife Act* 1974. It is not clear what further actions were carried out to this end, although the site was not gazetted as an Aboriginal place at this time.

The proclamation of Culgoa National Park in 1996 marked both an ending and a beginning for the descendants of the former Aboriginal occupants of Dennawan. While the park was not gazetted because of the existence of Dennawan and its importance, a close relationship developed between former NPWS Cultural Heritage Division staff and the local Aboriginal community while running a pilot cultural heritage study on newly acquired National Parks. Work in the park brought the memories and importance of the physical remains at Dennawan once again to the fore. Anthony English, archaeologist, and Sharon Veale, historian, both reported on aspects of the significance of Dennawan to the local Aboriginal community (English 1997; English and Veale 2001; Veale 1997). My involvement in recording the archaeology of the former reserve came largely in response to them relaying calls from the Aboriginal community for the DEC to record the archaeological remains at Dennawan.

Today, Dennawan consists of a discontinuous scatter of tin cans, broken glass and house frames distributed over several longitudinal sand dunes around a ground tank and soak. It is not the kind of 'site' which has been recognised as constituting pastoral heritage under the old 'woolsheds and homesteads' model. In its heyday, however, it was a bustling village and home to a community of Aboriginal people. The importance of Dennawan to this study lies in the fact that it was essentially a pastoral labour camp that serviced the surrounding pastoral properties, several of which are now managed as Culgoa National Park. As such, it is integral to understanding the pastoral history of these properties. Dennawan is also relevant as a case-study because of the relationship between the social significance of pastoral heritage and the physical remains that are left behind at such 'lost places', and as a detailed study of the methods for recording the archaeology of historic period Aboriginal settlements in New South Wales.

A HISTORY OF DENNAWAN AND ASSOCIATED PASTORAL STATIONS

It is not my intention here to provide a detailed history of Culgoa National Park and Dennawan, as Sharon Veale has expertly handled this task (Veale 1997), and others have done this for the surrounding area (Gill 1996). However, it is important at this point to sketch an outline of the pre-contact Aboriginal and shared post-contact settlement of the region, as context for telling the story of the rise and fall of Dennawan, and its relationship to the pastoral properties now contained within Culgoa.

COLONIAL EXPLORATION OF THE CULGOA RIVER

In 1845, Roderick Mitchell, the commissioner of Crown lands in the north-west of the colony, set about exploring and mapping the country around the Culgoa and Balonne Rivers.



FIGURE 7.3 Thomas Mitchell, 'Native of the Bogan', 1835: study for plate 12, *Three Expeditions into the interior of Eastern Australia*, vol 1. (Courtesy National library of Australia: nla.pic-an5117645)

His father, Surveyor-General Sir Thomas Mitchell, had set out at this time to discover an overland route from Sydney to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and a route to a northern seaport (Mitchell 1848). Like his father (see Baker 1998), Roderick Mitchell made use both of local Aboriginal knowledge and the accounts of stockmen who had begun scouting through this country in search of new grazing lands. Early in 1846, Roderick forwarded a sketch of the country he had discovered to his father. No runs are shown on the Culgoa at this time, which is recorded from its confluence with the Balonne to its confluence with the Birrie in the south-west.

Sir Thomas Mitchell had several encounters with Aboriginal people while mapping the course of the Bolonne and Culgoa Rivers in 1846. On encountering a Muruwari man and his wife fishing with hoop nets in the Bolonne, he had his guide Yuranigh ask the man about the Culgoa River. The man took Mitchell approximately seven miles to show him the Culgoa, and he was so pleased with the man's service that he presented him with an iron tomahawk (Baker 1997: 163–64).

Mitchell's descriptions of rich natural pasturage and abundant grasslands in the area contributed to applications by squatters to secure runs in this area after 1850. A circular from the surveyor-general in November 1847 instructed surveyors to obtain information about the character of the north-western plains in the light of a decision to extend settlement into these districts. Further explorations were undertaken by Kennedy in 1847, Gorman in 1848 and Wener in 1859 (Veale 1997: 29–31). However, even while the area had begun to be taken up by selectors, much of the country remained unsurveyed until the 1880s.

PASTORAL SETTLEMENT ALONG THE CULGOA

By 1850, the system of land tenure in New South Wales had been modified so that within the far north-west of the state in the unsettled districts, pastoralists were eligible for 14-year leases for runs totalling up to 50 square miles (32 000 acres: see Chapter 2). By 1861 (but possibly as early as 1848; see Veale 1997: 40), Thomas Caddell had taken up 16 000 acres of land along the Culgoa River. The block, named 'Tatalla' (now known as 'Tatala'), was managed by Frederick Wherritt, and in 1865 Cadell was pasturing 640 cattle on the lease. Early maps of the lease show improvements including fenced paddocks and huts. Wherritt lived on Tatala for a number of years with his wife Margaret, widely reputed to be the 'first white woman' to settle in northern New South Wales (Gill 1996: 26).

Other runs were taken up along the Culgoa around this time. This is confirmed by a map produced by surveyor Isaiah Rowland in 1862, which shows Thomas Hungerford's station and stockyard on the western bank of the Culgoa, and McKenzie's station in the area covered by the modern Weilmoringle station. Hungerford took up 13 runs along the Culgoa River in 1857, which later became part of Gnomery station. These encompass much of the country that is located within Culgoa National Park today.

In 1865 Hungerford was running cattle on all of the blocks except for Cawwell West, where he was grazing 4000 sheep. A pamphlet advertising the sale of the station spoke highly of the land as an 'unsurpassable fattening station ... salt bush country, consisting entirely of open plains, with a few Gidya ridges ... completely free from scrub' (see Bolton

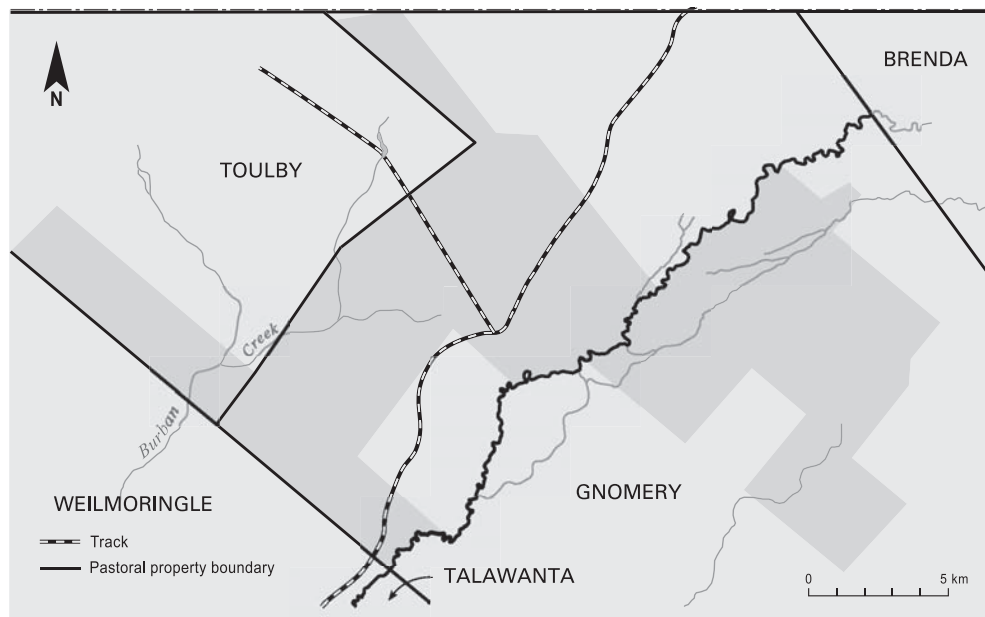


FIGURE 7.4 Pastoral property boundaries along the Culgoa, c 1870, showing relationship with Culgoa National Park (shaded).

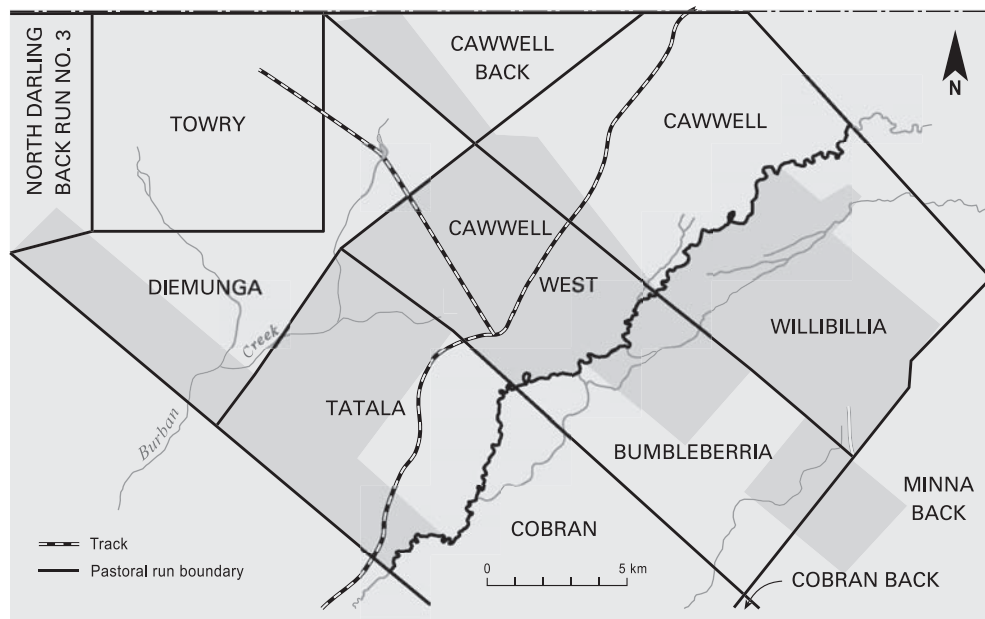


FIGURE 7.5 Pastoral run boundaries along the Culgoa c 1870, showing relationship with Culgoa National Park (shaded).

1881: 43). At the time of its sale in 1882 it was described as ‘without doubt one of the finest pastoral properties in Australia. Well watered and improved ... [it] would give an undoubted and profitable return’ (see Veale 1997: 50). The station was purchased by Robert Gayer and Co in early 1882, by which time it had been extensively improved, with two homesteads, outbuildings, three stockyards, horse paddocks, and post-and-wire fences on all boundaries. In 1886, Edward Ryan applied for 10 240 acres in the Cawwell West run, also known at this time as Bourbah.



FIGURE 7.6 (top) Pastoral run ‘Gnumery’ (no 66), on the New South Wales Crown Land administrative map, showing its division into leasehold and resumed areas. (Land Information Centre digital photograph from a SRNSW map; courtesy Department of Lands)

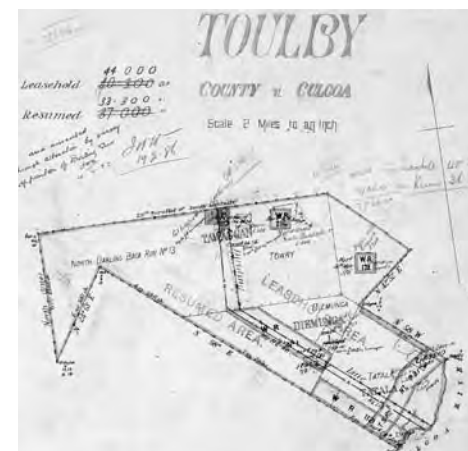


FIGURE 7.7 (below) Pastoral run Toulby (no 66) on a New South Wales Crown Land administrative map, showing its composition from Diemunga, Towry, Tatala and North Darling Back 3 runs. (Land Information Centre digital photograph from a SRNSW map; courtesy Department of Lands)

In 1885, Gnumery station was divided into leasehold and resumed areas. The entry of small-scale selectors in the late 1880s had a profound effect on the viability and carrying capacity of leases along the river. Several homestead leases with river frontages were selected along the Culgoa. The station known today as Byerawering was formed through the selection of two of these blocks – Bumbleberria and Willibillia. These were subject to a number of different improvements by various lessees over the 1880s to 1900s (Veale 1997: 53–56).

Similarly, the Cawwell Back and West Cawwell blocks were resumed and taken up by Edward Smyth in 1884. Smyth built a ‘two roomed hut with a good garden, a well, a stockyards and a horse paddock, two or three miles from the river’ sometime before 1889 (Description of property by Edmund Barton from the local land board, SRNSW 10/43770, lease no 492). In the 1890s, he pastured over 3000 sheep on the property. In 1900 the property was sold to E J Saunders.

From the turn of the century to the time of its purchase by Joseph Lloyd in 1913, Cawwell changed hands many times. The property was managed and owned by two generations of Lloyds, over which time two homesteads were constructed and many improvements made to the property. In 1966, the Lloyds sold the property to the Majors, the property changing to the Hamblins in 1979, and the Ponders in 1986. The former NPWS purchased the property from Ian and Pam Ponder in 1996.

Tatala similarly underwent several changes of ownership. In 1875, C B Fisher acquired Tatala. Part of the area was purchased as Toulby station by John Robb in 1881–82. In 1885, Toulby comprised 76 980 acres and included Diemunga, the North Darling back run no 3, Tatala and Towry runs. In 1887 there were 7000 sheep, eight head of cattle and 40 horses on the property. By 1897 there were over 53 000 sheep and 383 head of cattle on Toulby, and improvements included several wells, a woolwash, a three-roomed slab hut, stables and tank. This was a period of relative wealth and high levels of sheep stocking on the property.

With his wife Julia, Dennis Hagarty purchased Toulby station in 1910. The property was managed by two generations of Haggertys until it was sold in 1959. Aboriginal people played an important role in the running of Toulby, camping on the block at Tatala and working



FIGURE 7.8 (left) The old homestead at Cawwell, constructed by the Lloyd family in 1913 or earlier.

FIGURE 7.9 (right) A new family home was built at Cawwell in the early 1950s.

seasonally on the property. During the Second World War, race meetings and dances were held in the Toulby woolshed to raise money for the war. These were attended and enjoyed by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike.

Frederick Richard Divall – who in April 1888 selected the minimum area permissible under the Act for a homestead lease – formed Burban Grange pastoral station partly through the selection of 5760 acres under the *Crown Lands Act* 1884. This land was in the resumed area of Toulby station. Divall's lease was gazetted in October 1888, at which time he moved his stock to the lease and set about fencing the property. Initially occupying an iron lean-to, by June 1889 he had commenced work on a new house. In 1892 Edmund Barton inspected the property and found Divall living in a four-roomed house built of pine with an iron roof. Several years later he added three rooms to accommodate his wife and children. The remains of these two early structures are now contained within Culgoa National Park.

Burban Grange changed hands several times between 1895 and 1911, until it was purchased by Francis James Connelly. Connelly immediately set about expanding the lease area by adding adjacent portions of land. Jim Connelly recounts how he grew up at Burban Grange, helping his father run the property and being educated with his brother and sisters by a governess in a schoolroom built just off the Burban Grange kitchen (Veale 1997). The first homestead at Burban Grange was destroyed in a fire in 1937. In the early 1940s a new homestead was built by a Brewarrina carpenter, to Jim's mother's design, on the same site.

Jim Connelly recalled the important contributions made by Aboriginal people from Dennawan to the running of Burban Grange:

Wigetty Hooper worked at Burban Grange, and his father Sam did too, that's about all of the Hoopers. Robin Campbell, Shillin Jackson, Colin Bailey, Bob Bailey, Jack Bailey they were all brothers. And Lizzy, that's Robin's wife, she used to do a lot of housework at home and also her sister Emmie used to do a lot of housework when we were kids. They had a camp of their own at Burban. They had their own tent and bough shed, that sort of thing. It was just up on the sandhill east of the house (interview, in Veale 1997).

Jim Connelly ran Burban Grange until the 1980s, when he sold the property to the Campbells, from whom the former NPWS purchased the property in 1998.

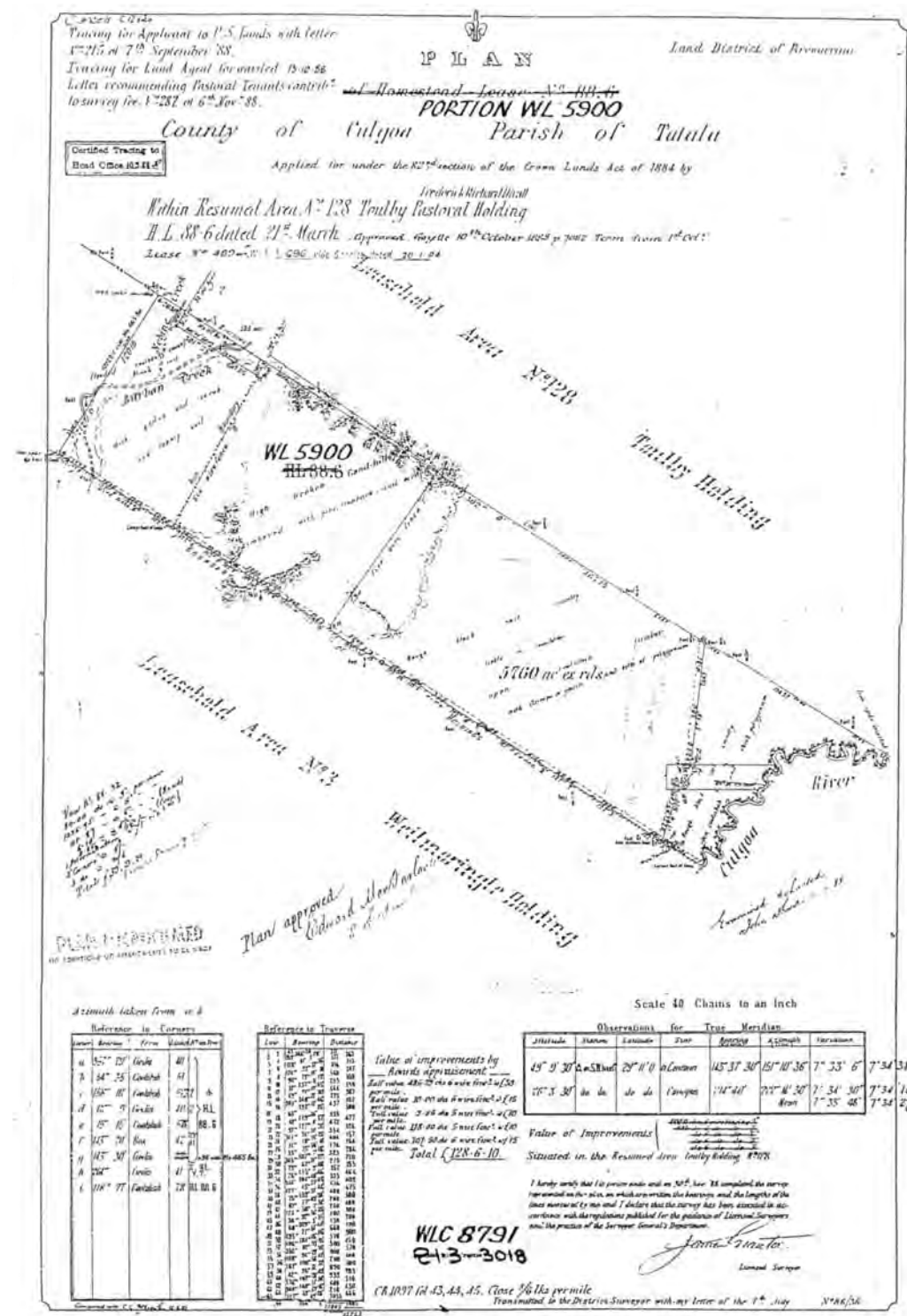


FIGURE 7.10 Portion WL5900, County of Culgoa, Parish of Tatala, 7 September 1888, showing the block selected by Frederick Richard Divall.

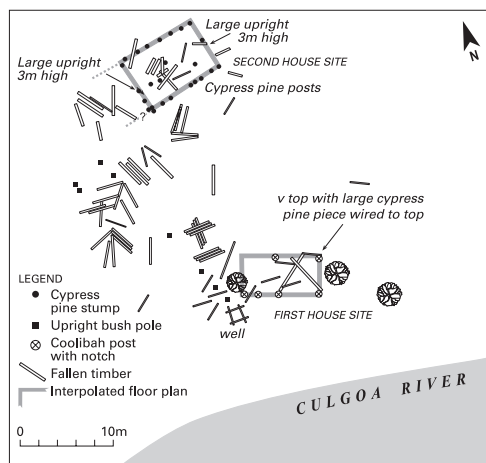


FIGURE 7.11 Site plan showing the remains of Frederick Richard Divall's homestead site, Culgoa National Park.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND SETTLERS ON THE CULGOA

The *Imperial Waste Lands Act* of 1848 maintained an earlier provision enabling land to be reserved for the use and benefit of Aborigines (see Chapter 2). However, conflicts over land were inevitable in the light of the settlers' hunger to contain and clear hundreds and thousands of hectares of land for grazing on the Western Plains. Massacres of, and retaliations by, Aboriginal people for loss of land were reported in the

areas surrounding the Culgoa. By 1849 clashes between Aboriginal people and settlers had taken place on the Bolonne and lower Condamine Rivers (Heathcoate 1965: 96). At Hospital Creek near Brewarrina, Aboriginal people were massacred in retribution for a suspected killing of a white stockman; and massacres also occurred at Butcher's Tree near Brewarrina mission, along the Barwon, and on the Narran River (Mathews 1977: 123–25). There was a widespread fear of Aboriginal people among white pastoralists in the first wave of settlement, who thought Aboriginal people:

continually attacked and killed the cattle on many stations ... they have also several times threatened to attack stations and murder the Europeans ... it will be very long for the Aborigines become peaceable and friendly to the white men, they are now so treacherous and unfriendly that no white man goes from home even for a short distance without firearms (Governor's dispatches, vol V74, August to December 1853, ML A1263, CY1949).

The clashes had a profound effect on Aboriginal patterns of land use. William Ridley, a missionary who travelled along the Condamine and Barwon rivers in 1855 noted 'after some fatal conflicts in which some colonists and many Aborigines were slain, the blacks have been awed into submission to the orders which forbade their access to the river' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 December 1855).

These conflicts began to ease by the late 1850s, when many white labourers deserted the region to take part in the gold rushes (Goodall 1996). Aboriginal people were able to

FIGURE 7.12 (left) The remains of Frederick Richard Divall's homestead, Culgoa National Park.

FIGURE 7.13 (right) Colvol & Wilson, 'Drovers camp, Goodooga, NSW', c 1900. Many early selector's dwellings in western New South Wales consisted of little more than canvas camps. (Courtesy State Library of New South Wales: BCP 03645)



FIGURE 7.14 (left) 'A wool scouring plant on Weilmoringle station', nd. Many Aboriginal people along the Culgoa were employed on pastoral properties. Here several Muruwari people are washing wool as part of a wool washing team before bailing and sending it to market. (Courtesy Museum Victoria: MM 006282)



FIGURE 7.15 (right) 'Rams being shorn on Weilmoringle Station. The shearers are using hand shears', nd. (Courtesy Museum Victoria: MM 006290)

take up the work that had been abandoned on the pastoral runs in the area, and by the 1860s the commissioner of Crown lands reported that Aboriginal people had been rapidly incorporated into the pastoral economy (see Chapter 2).

Evidence of relatively good relations on Tatala between Aboriginal people and settlers existed even before this time. For those Aboriginal people who settled early on pastoral properties: 'The surviving natives have no wants unsatisfied. They are attached to the different stations on which they chiefly depend for subsistence and where they make themselves useful; resuming at intervals their original habits and absenting themselves for short periods' (Roderick Mitchell to Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands, SRNSW 4/1141: 2).

The good relationship between Wherritt and the Aboriginal people camped on Tatala is reflected in a newspaper article that noted:

Mr Wherritt ... took up a station for himself on the Culgoa River, on the borders of Queensland, which he named Tatala, where he resided for many years, three of his children being the first whites born out there. At this time the blacks were very numerous and troublesome, and he was remarkable for his tact and humanity in dealing with them. For this he was repaid in the flood of 1861, when the blacks saved hundreds of his sheep by moving them to the sand hills, the only places not under water (cited in Gill 1996: 26).

With permissive occupancy, Aboriginal people on Tatala were able to maintain connections with their traditional country, while remaining under the patronage and 'protection' of local pastoralists and selectors. Aboriginal people continued to be an important part of the pastoral workforce well into the twentieth century, and the Waitaliba Aboriginal community at Weilmoringle today is a continuation of the tradition of Aboriginal pastoral labour camps on the property (Gill 1996). The long-standing importance of pastoral work to Muruwari people is demonstrated by the presence of Muruwari words to describe pastoral processes and animals. Linguist Lynette Oates (1988; 1992), with the help of Dennawan resident Emily Horneville, recorded many Muruwari words for such things in the 1970s, while Arthur Hooper was able to provide a similar list of words in 2001 (see Table 7.1).

ABORIGINAL PASTORAL CAMPS ALONG THE CULGOA RIVER

During the first 40 years of white settlement, Aboriginal people along the Culgoa became increasingly sedentary, forming four main pastoral labour camps at Milroy, Mundiwa, Weilmoringle and Tatala (Gill 1996: 13). Jimmie Barker, a remarkable Muruwari biographer

TABLE 7.1 Select list of Muruwari words demonstrating the importance of pastoralism to Aboriginal people on the Culgoa. (After Oates [and Mrs Ornab] 1988; 1992; and Arthur Hooper interview 2001)

ENGLISH	MURUWARI
sheep	thumpa (from 'jumbuck')
lamb	yalaamu
cattle	milimpuray; kitatal (from 'cattle')
horse	yarraman
pig	piki piki; biligbili (from 'piggie piggie')
dog	yuki; miriwula; ngurun
goat	nanikur
hat	dagundi
boots	mundawi
trousers	daruwa
flour	muntha ('bread')
tea	tea; nundu (tea with no sugar, from word for 'bitter')
tobacco	byurga

and storyteller, was born at Mundiwa in 1900 and lived there until he was eight, at which time the camp was deserted following the death of Jimmie Kerrigan (Mathews 1977: 25). People from Mundiwa moved for a time to Weilmoringle, Goodooga, Enngonia and Bourke, although the camp later reformed. After the camp at Mundiwa was abandoned, Jimmie Barker moved with his mother to Milroy station, where his mother worked in the homestead doing domestic duties and Jimmie worked for Mrs Armstrong watering the gardens. Emily Horneville, who was born at Milroy in 1882, noted that at the turn of the twentieth century, after the first wave of violence and massacres, life for Aboriginal people was relatively stable and peaceful along the Culgoa. Emily was the fourth child of six and both her mother and stepfather worked on Milroy pastoral station, as she did later on (Oates 1983).

Emily Horneville records details of travelling up the Culgoa to Weilmoringle station, 50 kilometres upstream, where most of her relatives lived, or another 20 kilometres upriver from Weilmoringle to Dennawan. Many of her childhood activities involved the river, where she swam and helped the women collect nardoo seeds in the surrounding swamps. She would occasionally accompany family members on nocturnal hunts for possums, or on goanna hunts during the winter when the hibernating reptiles could be dug out of the holes in the sandhills. Camp life was often fun, but Emily recalls that at times the stresses of pastoral work erupted into fights with sticks and nulla-nullas.

Like many Aboriginal girls, Emily went away from Milroy when she was ten years old to work on another pastoral property at Bunari. She recalls the cruel dealing she received from her mistress at Bunari. On discovering this, one of her relatives brought Emily back to Milroy. She worked at a number of pastoral properties in the surrounding district, before being married in a Christian ceremony at Milroy in 1904. Aboriginal people also found employment at Weilmoringle pastoral station at this time (see Gill 1996).

ABORIGINAL LIFEWAYS ON THE CULGOA RIVER

Language gives us an understanding of the nature of Muruwari lifeways along the Culgoa River in the past. Oates recorded Muruwari names for 34 waterholes along the Culgoa

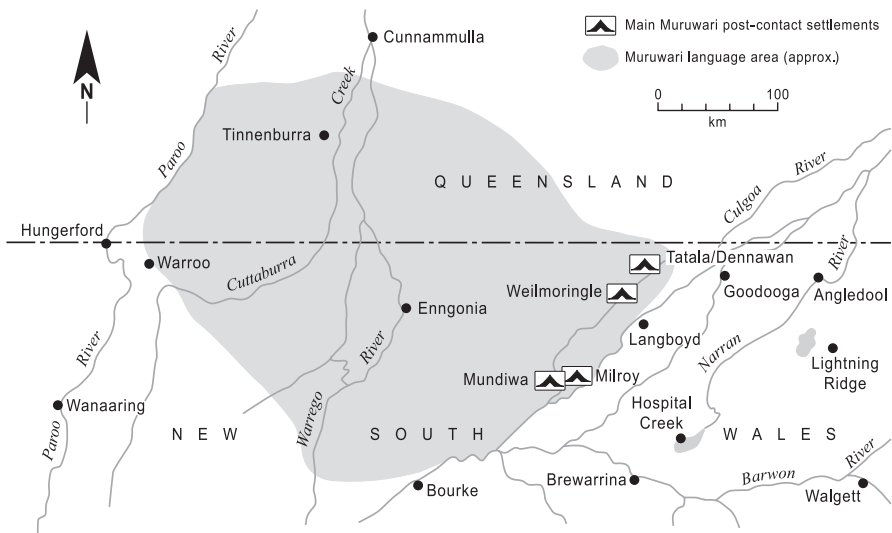


FIGURE 7.16 (above) The approximate area in which the Muruwari language was spoken at the time of European contact, and the location of important post-contact Muruwari settlements.

River. The river was both the source of food and water as well as a travelling route through country; both the storyline and lifeline for Muruwari people: ‘The Culgoa River was the very heart of what they considered “home”’ (Oates 1988: 1).

Muruwari territory extended from Brewarrina in the south-east, to Goodooga in the east, almost as far north as Cunnamulla, and west to Warroo (Mathews 1977). Moving between the river and the plains country seasonally:

They lived on fish, enjoying the yellow-belly and cod most of all. They snared emus. They hunted birds, goannas, even some snakes. They dug for yams, waterlily roots and some grasses. They collected plenty of wild fruit from the many trees that grew around the rivers and swamps (Oates 1992: 53).

Continued access to wild food resources was one of the benefits of itinerant pastoral work. Norton (1907), who travelled through the area in 1859, noted that ‘The blacks camped about stations caught fish and wild ducks and gave as of their abundance’. Today many Muruwari people continue to enjoy and depend on wild food resources and the Culgoa River

FIGURE 7.17 (below left) ‘An Aboriginal family outside their home on Weilmoringle Station. The shack is constructed from corrugated iron’, nd. Weilmoringle, like Tata/Dennawan, was what Jimmy Barker and Emily Horneville described as one of four main post-contact Muruwari settlements. (Courtesy Museum Victoria: MM 006285)

FIGURE 7.18 (below right) ‘Aboriginal maid ironing at “Keleno” station, Bourke NSW’, c 1912. In addition to stockwork, many Muruwari women worked as domestic staff on pastoral properties. (Courtesy State Library of New South Wales: BCP 05733)





FIGURE 7.19 'Two Aboriginal women and a young girl in front of their home on Weilmoringle Station. Their home is constructed from wood and hessian', nd. (Courtesy Museum Victoria: MM 006284)

(English 2000; English and Brown 2000).

Muruwari country was and is rich with Dreaming. The journeys of ancestral beings created the courses of the river and the waterholes within it. Mundagaddah, a powerful 'rainbow serpent', is associated with a waterhole near Weilmoringle (Oates 1988: 2; Veale 1997: 25). Jimmy Barker recounted many aspects of the traditional and post-contact life of Muruwari people to Janet Mathews in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Mathews 1977). He described in detail the constructions of various different kinds of shelter at Mundiwa, north of Dennawan:

The people made sheds from the bark of the red box tree. The rough outer part was removed until the red colour was showing, then the bark was heated to make it more pliable. These sheets would then be greased with goanna fat and several sheets would be piled on the ground with a weight on top of them ... the huts, which were low, had been made this way for centuries. Sticks were placed over the roof and tied down with vines and sinews (Mathews 1977: 6).

Although life in a pastoral camp did allow for continued access to country, life was often difficult for Aboriginal people in such camps:

Our tent was about twelve feet square and kept some of the rain out. Sometimes it was very hot and I can remember that it worried mother, who had to cook on an outside fire and work hard to keep us clean and fed. Daily living seemed a struggle for her all the time, especially in the summer. We had no furniture or possessions worth mentioning ... mother stuffed possum skins with emu feathers for our pillows (Mathews 1977: 5).

Jimmy Barker's son, Roy, who grew up on Brewarrina mission, described the pattern of work undertaken by Aboriginal people in the pastoral industry on the Culgoa:

I shore at Cawwell, shore at Toulby, most of the places, Weilmoringle I shore there and at Gnomery, Brenda. These were contractors that I worked with, the March Bros from Goodooga and I did quite a lot of work for these guys, especially along the Culgoa, down in that part of the country. And my first contract in that area as far as the shearing industry was concerned was when I was with a contractor by the name of Gus Cork in the early 1940s. He used to have a [shearing] run from a place called Middleton and another place called Dooralong that were owned by the one family, the Thompson family. From there, we went on to another place called Burringbar, the Taylors owned it. Then down the Culgoa from Weilmoringle to a place called Woollahra, and Marylands beneath it, right down there till the run was finished. It took up to three months to do the run. This was the sort of a general pattern for people that worked in the pastoral industry in Muruwari country (Roy Barker interview, 11 April 2002).

It was Roy's opinion that this work pattern on the pastoral properties in Muruwari country

was an important part of the Muruwari system, and allowed him and many other Muruwari people to maintain close ties with each other and the land.

Aboriginal people found all kinds of work in the pastoral industry on the Culgoa. Many men, like Roy Barker and Arthur Hooper, became expert shearers, and found their skills valued on a shearing circuit that often took them across the border into south-west Queensland and back again. Aboriginal women found work in fencing and mustering, as well as in domestic tasks around the station. Arthur Hooper explained:

Well most of them were smart old girls ... some of them used to go out fencing you know? And cutting wood, with the men ... but mostly they were housemaids ... cleaning the house, doing the washing, ironing, all that stuff. That's what they used to call the housemaid's job. That was their job. But they had cooks too, out at Weilmoringle, cooks, grooms, gardeners, everything. It was really good (interview, 9 April 2001).

Shearing work was not always available, in which case men would do 'a bit of fencing, and a bit of mustering, and, you know, bits of everything. You had to do the little bits of work, to get a job!' (Arthur Hooper interview, 11 April 2001).

The nature and availability of pastoral labour in the area was a critical factor in allowing Muruwari and other local Aboriginal people to live on or adjacent to their country, and continue to undertake particular cultural practices that allowed the continuation of their traditions even while transforming their lifeworld.

DENNAWAN

The small hamlet of Dennawan was both a microcosm of, and nexus for, Aboriginal-settler relations on the pastoral frontier in western New South Wales. This section describes the history of the former settlement, which leads in to the discussion of the archaeology and social significance of the hamlet and Aboriginal Reserve discussed in Chapters 8 and 9 respectively.

PUB AND TRAVELLING STOCK-ROUTE

In the 1880s, in response to the increasing settlement of the area around the Culgoa, a small settlement grew up at Bourbah around a local pub and post office, at the junction of two travelling stock-routes. (The terms 'Bourbah' and 'Bourah/Bowrah/Bowra' appear to have originally referred to the hotel and paddock in which it occurred respectively, although the terms are often used interchangeably in associated historical documents.) Such reserved travelling stock-routes were a fundamental part of the pastoral economy in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and allowed the free movement of people and stock across the country from widely spaced pastoral properties to livestock markets. Public watering points were gazetted along travelling stock-routes to allow the watering of stock while they were being moved along the routes (see Chapter 2).

By this time, two travelling stock-routes – one of them the main route through to Queensland – ran along the Culgoa River, through the property which would later become Cawwell. The convergence of two stock-routes and public watering point provided an ideal location for an inn, part of the infrastructure that allowed the system of stock-routes to function by providing a watering point for both animals and drovers. Edward Ryan's hotel was located on a conditional purchase of 80 acres that he had applied for in 1878 under the *Crown Lands Act* 1861. The land was surveyed in 1882, by which time a house, kitchen, store, stable, two wells and a yard had been constructed.

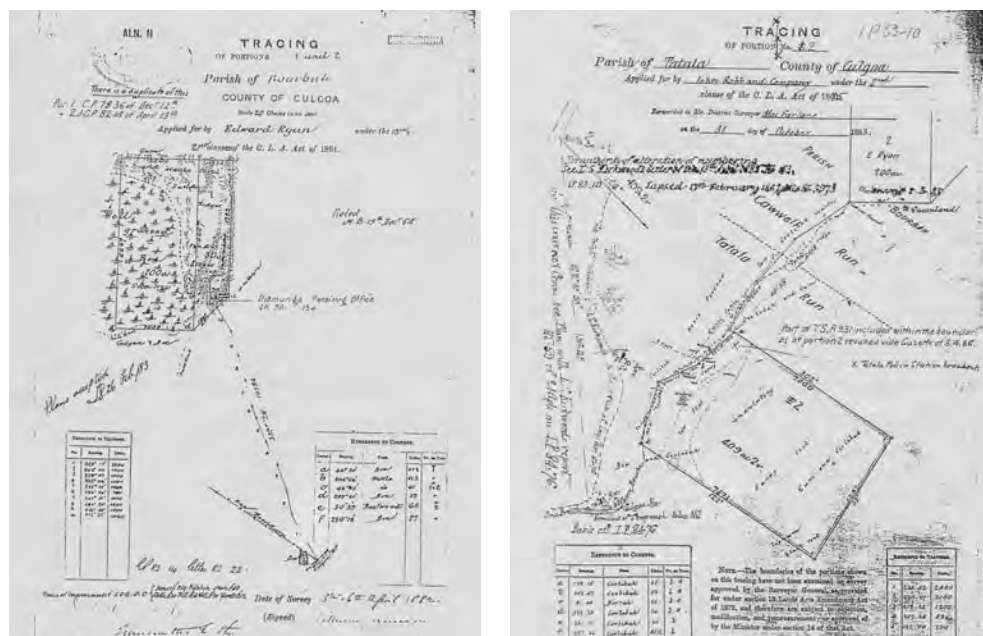


FIGURE 7.20 (left) Tracing of portions 1 and 2, parish of Bourbah, County of Culgoa, 6 April 1882, showing Edward Ryan's hotel. (DEC)

FIGURE 7.21 (right) Tracing of portion 2, parish of Tatala, County of Culgoa, 1883, showing Tatala police station, with a track running north from Bourke past Edward Ryan's hotel. (DEC)

In July 1889 the Brewarrina Progress Committee wrote to the postmaster-general, saying that there was a 'great necessity ... for a mail service ... on the Culgoa River, thence up that river to Bowra' (Veale 1997: 80). In 1890, John Nowlan from Bourke was awarded the tender to carry mail to and from Brewarrina and 'Bowra' once a week. A receiving office was then established at Edward Ryan's hotel.

The hotel caused problems for local Aboriginal people, who were camped along the travelling stock-route on Tatala close by. This camp, along with another at Diemunga Lagoon, is very likely the one established when Aboriginal people started camping on Tatala prior to 1861. The control of gambling and drunkenness, as well as the task of distributing rations to local Aboriginal people, was undertaken by the local police constable. Established by 1883, the police station at Tatala had a chequered history, being staffed throughout the last part of the nineteenth century, closing for a short period in 1916, before being permanently closed in 1920. A survey of the police station in 1883 shows the station building, a house, huts, drafting yards, wool, woolshed, tank and horse paddock. The police station was immediately to the south of the Bourah hotel and receiving office on the travelling stock-route.

Goodooga police reports show that a few of the Aboriginal people at Tatala were receiving rations. In 1900, for example, clothing was purchased for 50 aged and infirm Aboriginal people at Goodooga, Tatala and Angledool (Gill 1996: 32). At that time, the supply of alcohol to Aboriginal people was prohibited by law and it appears to have been a constant problem at Tatala. In 1903 police convicted three people for supplying alcohol to Aboriginal people (Veale 1997: 93). Relations between Aboriginal people and settlers at the settlement were obviously problematic, with accounts of sexual exploitation of Aboriginal women and occasional drunkenness amongst the men.

A fire at the turn of the twentieth century destroyed the Bourah hotel, and a new one was

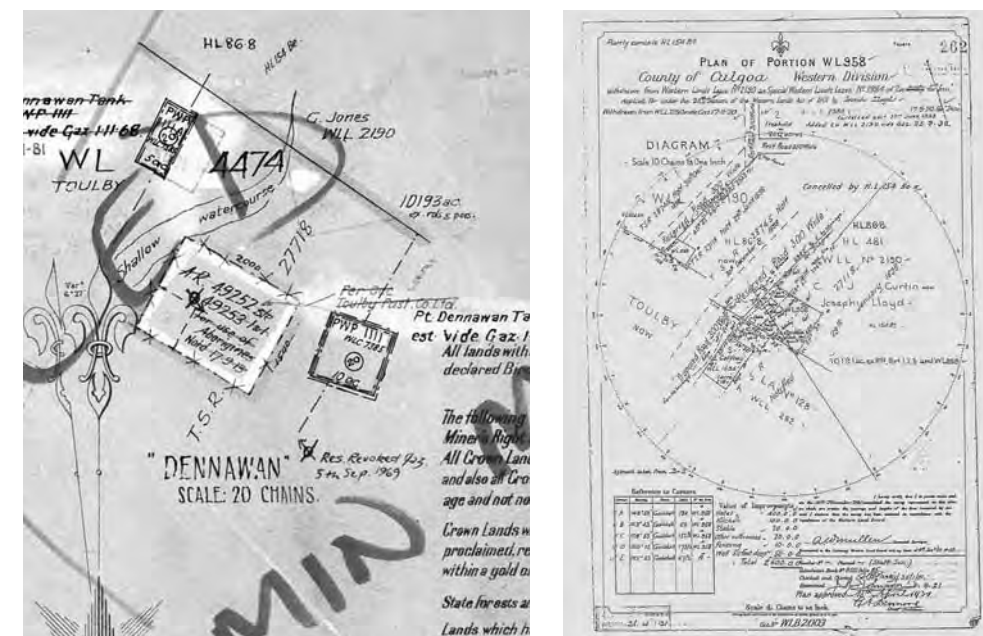


FIGURE 7.22 (left) Dennawan Reserve 'for use of Aborigines notd 17.9.13', County Culgoa map, edn 3, 1941. (Land Information Centre digital photograph from a SRNSW map; courtesy Department of Lands)

FIGURE 7.23 (right) Tracing of plan of portion WL 958, 17 September 1920, showing Mrs Gaffney's shop and post office, and the second Bourah Hotel. (DEC)

built in 1901 approximately 2 kilometres to the south, near the area where Aboriginal people were camped alongside a small lagoon and close to the Tatala police station. At this time, the receiving office changed hands, and mail was administered through the police station. In 1907 the receiving office became known as Dennawan Post Office, which addressed a number of problems caused by the widespread use of the term 'Tatala' to describe Bourah, and the similarity of the name to Tatala, a post office near Moama (Veale 1997: 89). 'Dennawan' was probably based on the Muruwari word for emu – 'dinawan'.

THE RESERVE

In September 1900, Constable Venables informed the Aborigines Protection Board that he had interviewed Aboriginal people camping at Tatala about moving to the board's supervised mission at Brewarrina. He reported that 'the natives do not wish to go to Brewarrina ... they had an idea that strange blacks would kill their children. It would be impossible to induce any of the Aborigines to leave Tatala except by force' (cited in Veale 1997).

In 1912, about 20 Aboriginal people were recorded as remaining camped at Tatala on part of the travelling stock-route, not far from the Bourah Hotel. It was argued that, if an area was reserved exclusively for Aboriginal people and fenced, the constable could 'compel them to camp on it and prevent objectionable people trespassing on the Reserve'. The reserve at Dennawan was officially surveyed in 1912 in an area mid-way between the police station and hotel. It was gazetted in September 1913, and serviced by the police station, hotel and Mrs Gaffney's store at Tatala.

The store at Dennawan not only provided rations to older and infirm Aboriginal people, but was also an important source of processed food for pastoral workers to supplement their bush foods. The store stocked a range of items including tea, sugar, flour, soap, tinned meat, baking powder and boiled lollies.

The receiving office and telephone exchange would eventually be relocated to a building next to the store. In 1924 the role of postmaster was taken up by Robert Breslin, a school teacher. In 1926 the running of both the post office and store fell to Alfred Bishop ('King') Stephens, who was married to an Aboriginal woman called Annie. Jim Connelly recalls trips to the shop to receive the mail:

Dad would go into Dennawan to get the mail, that was twice a week, and the old dark fellas would come up to the post office to get some stores, and they would say, 'Were having a big corroboree tonight Boss, you going to come in?' And of course we would all go in that old Chrysler car. It would start just after dark (Jim Connelly interview, in Veale 1997: 71).

The closure of the store in 1940 and the sale of the post-office building is considered to be one of the things that contributed to the demise of the village at Dennawan. During the 1930s the postal business was in decline. The land was sold to the Toulby pastoral company, and the store was dismantled and moved to Burban Grange (Veale 1997: 99–100).

During 1919 a widespread influenza epidemic (see Goodall 1996) led to several deaths of older Aboriginal people at Dennawan (Veale 1997: 98ff). Local Aboriginal people at Dennawan have located two cemeteries, and it is thought that the northern cemetery is of ten burials after deaths from influenza in 1919 (see Chapter 8). Deaths of Aboriginal people occurred throughout Muruwari territory at this time, with another 10–12 deaths at Weilmoringle (Oates 1983: 115).

ABORIGINES INLAND MISSION

Missionary workers from the Aborigines Inland Mission (AIM) arrived at Dennawan for the first time in 1931, when people were facing starvation because of the difficulties they were having in gathering food. Miss Ginger, one of the first missionaries to work at Dennawan, recorded some of her initial reactions to the settlement in the magazine *Our AIM*: 'We are hemmed in by mud and water. We have had no mail for two weeks and are told not to expect any for two or three more ... we had a day's sport here and were really surprised to find so many people. They were shy at first but are beginning to come round' (28 July 1931: 7).

Things were no better in 1932, when Miss Ginger wrote:

On waking at 5 o'clock on Dec. 27. I found the flood had entered my camp through the night and was 4 inches deep. What an awakening it was! The outside of my net was black

with mosquitoes: the sandflies are much worse ... as they raise great lumps all over one's body. It is dreadful here, the water is now 3 feet high in my camp ... Oh, it has been so hot! Denewan, dreadful Denewan! (Our AIM, 25 January 1932: 15).

Jim Connelly recalled that Miss Ginger and her fellow missionaries Mr Blunt and Miss Bailey lived in tents or bough sheds near the post office (Veale 1997: 103). A mission house was built for the missionaries between 1936 and 1937 (AIM annual reports 1936; 1937). It was



FIGURE 7.24 The Ferguson family at Dennawan in 1936: Duncan (rear), his wife Blanche (seated) holding baby Cheeko, with Gloria, June and Fred. (Courtesy June Barker)



FIGURE 7.25 John Flynn, 'Two cars at a crossroad in New South Wales, with a signpost pointing to Hungerford, Barrington and Wanaaring in one direction, and to Sydney and Brewarrina in other directions', c. 1930. This photograph was taken at around the same time that the first Aborigines Inland Missionaries went to Dennawan. (AIM collection; courtesy National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an24507577)

shortly before this time that AIM native workers Duncan and Blanche Ferguson arrived at Dennawan with their young family. June Barker was a young girl when she moved to Dennawan with her parents, and remembers:

I was just a few months old when we arrived at Dennawan ... the people at Dennawan were nearly all Muruwari, and the shelters they lived in were made from whatever could be found around the rubbish heaps, kerosene tins, corn bags, pieces of old roofing iron ... some still living in gunyahs, made from bark and boughs ... everyone kept their camps lovely and clean, the mothers would sweep all the camps everyday with a brush broom (Barker nd).

Duncan Ferguson built a kerosene-tin house for himself and his family to live in, moving to the mission house in the late 1930s. In late 1938 or early 1939, the Ferguson family and the mission post moved to Brewarrina (*The Australian Evangel*, November 1938: 2), however Duncan continued to act as a missionary to Dennawan and other outstations as one of a series of AIM field 'stations'.

Church was held in a bough shelter in the middle of the settlement, and Miss Ginger and Miss Bailey taught the children in a school held under a large tree. The women were taught sewing, and many people learnt to read at Dennawan. Particular favoured hymns are widely associated with Miss Ginger and Miss Bailey, and the missionaries and the place continued as sources for collective identification even several years after the Dennawan Reserve was abandoned. In August 1945, Duncan Ferguson noted: 'Last Sunday quite a few of our Dennawan people were here at the afternoon Service in town, and I was able to tell them something of Miss Ginger, who laboured among them for so long. They still remembered the old hymns and sang them from memory' (*Our AIM*, 16 August 1945: 18).

The persistence of Dennawan as a place for collective identification has continued to the present day, in the sense in which Muruwari people who are descendants of Dennawan residents continue to identify themselves as 'Dennawan people'.

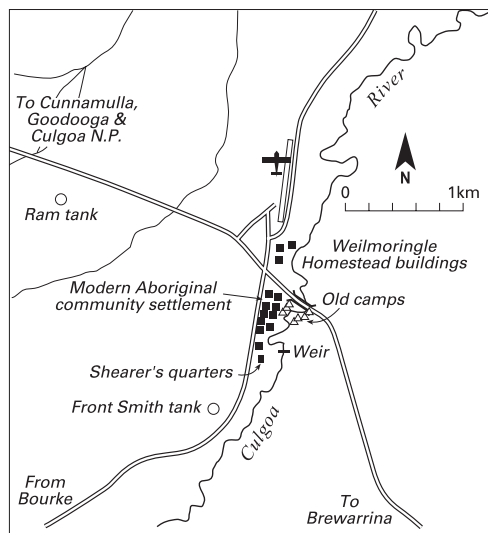


FIGURE 7.26 Weilmoringle, showing the contemporary Aboriginal community housing, Weilmoringle homestead, and the old camps along the Culgoa River on the former Weilmoringle Reserve.

WHY DID PEOPLE LEAVE?

Increased powers given to the Aborigines Protection Board, through amendments to the *Aboriginal Protection Act* in 1936, had considerable impact on Aboriginal communities in the north-west of New South Wales. In 1938, as part of a 'concentration' strategy, the board proposed to relocate Aboriginal people from Dennawan to Brewarrina Mission, approximately 150 kilometres to the south (Goodall 1996: 198). Ration support from the board was uncertain and sporadic. Economic

depression and a decline in the availability of local pastoral work due to the widespread withdrawals of land from larger leaseholders (later made available as additional areas for smaller leaseholders) also contributed to this move (Smith 2000: 181). The closure of the post office and store at Dennawan meant an effective end of all services to the remote settlement. This situation coupled with an extremely bad drought probably finally forced Aboriginal people into larger nearby centres such as Goodooga, Brewarrina and Enngonia (Creamer nd).

In June 1939, Duncan Ferguson, by this time resident at Brewarrina mission, wrote of a trip to Goodooga, noting that many Aboriginal people from Dennawan had begun to move.

I had a splendid trip out to Goodooga last week, when I rode away from here on my bike just at sunrise, and arrived at Goodooga, 76 miles away, just at sunset, and had all day Wednesday there among our Dennawan people, who live there now, having kerosene-tin huts built on the Bukarra river, right near town ... then I went to Dennawan, where there are only five people left ... there are not so many at Weilmoringle, either, as there were – perhaps 50 all told (Our AIM, 18 June 1939: 8-9; see also The Australian Evangel, July 1939: 3).

Although Duncan Ferguson thought this camp was in decline, some of the former occupants of Dennawan found a home in the camp on Weilmoringle pastoral station. Dorothy Kelly remembers the camp at Weilmoringle in which she lived with her mother and sisters. Most of the Aboriginal people were camped on the other side of the river from where the community have their houses today.

The community encampment at Weilmoringle in the early 1970s was described in detail by then University of Sydney architecture students, Ken George and Stanislaus Savarton, who were researching a thesis on house designs for Aboriginal people (Savarton and George 1971). As a result of their work and campaigning by both local Aboriginal people and Rens Gill, owner of Weilmoringle station, new housing was built at Weilmoringle in the late 1970s. Reticulated water and sewerage were installed in the early 1980s, and more houses were constructed in the community (Gill 1996: 101). Today Waitaliba Aboriginal community at Weilmoringle has around 20 buildings, and Weilmoringle Station has been purchased by the Aboriginal Lands Trust to be handed back to Muruwari Aboriginal people.

ATTACHMENTS TO DENNAWAN

Dennawan is a place to which many Aboriginal people have a close spiritual and emotional attachment, remembering their experience there as a time when 'traditional knowledge and cultural life was sustained and integrated with participation in the local pastoral economy and the development of distinct skills, experiences, and interactions'. Betty Waites recalled that:

There were a lot of children at Dennawan. There was the West family, and they had children, they had a girl. The Cubby's, I played with them and Mrs Grimes and there was a woman called Granny Suzie, Donald Byno's sister, we used to call her, this is the nickname now, Grannie Doonie. But she had girls and we used to play together. We had this big rounders ground and we all had to play there, at the rounders ground. It was all families living together, but you know they used to share what they got. If one went out and got the wild meat, the others they'd share (Betty Waites interview, in Veale 1997: 106).

Dennawan's significance as a place of collective memory to the Aboriginal community is emphasized by Veale when she recalls Essie Coffie's description of returning to Dennawan as 'coming home' (1997: 106). For those younger people who never lived at Dennawan, it is an important symbol in the history of Muruwari people. It represents the strong pastoral history of Aboriginal people, and their relationship with the Culgoa River. For many, Dennawan is a key to understanding the past.

CHAPTER 8

The archaeology of the former Dennawan Reserve



FIGURE 8.1 The lagoon in the middle of the travelling stock-route at Dennawan.

This chapter describes the results of a detailed archaeological surface mapping of artefacts at the former Dennawan Aboriginal Reserve, and associated sites in Culgoa National Park. This survey was primarily to record in detail the archaeology of this pastoral labour camp, but with questions regarding the chronology and nature of the development of the settlement at Dennawan in mind. I was also interested in what sort of information archaeology might provide about the lives of its inhabitants.

DESCRIPTION AND SITE CONTEXT

The site is located on ground that slopes gently to the south, and is crossed by several longitudinal sand dunes that run in a north-easterly direction. These sandhills are lightly vegetated with tussock grasses, lignum (*Muehlenbeckia florulenta*), narrow-leaved hopbush

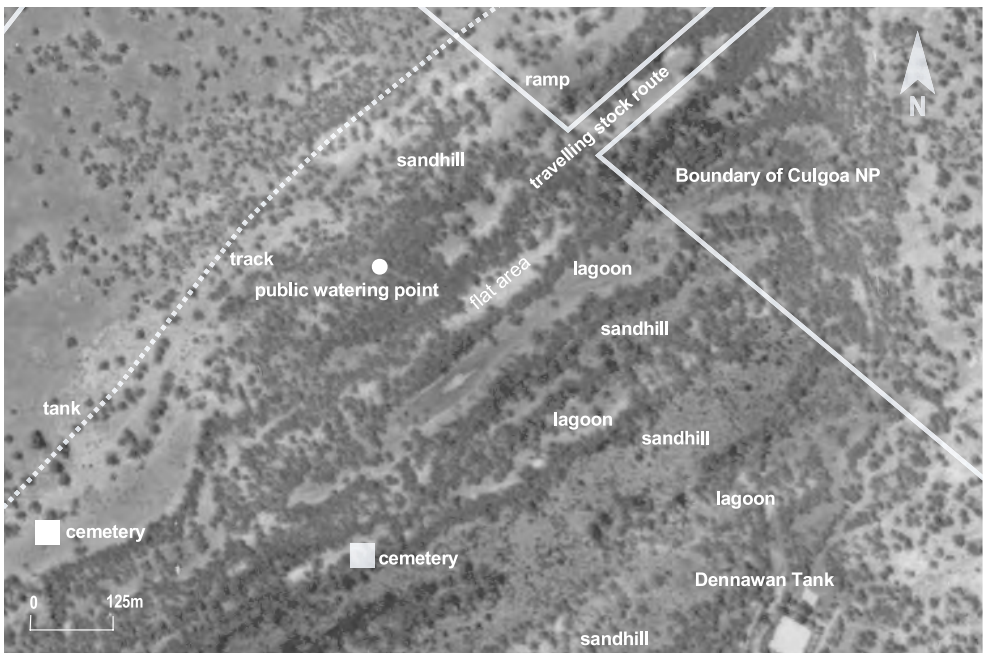


FIGURE 8.2 Annotated air photograph showing the principle topographic features of Dennawan.

(*Dodonaea viscosa*) and scattered acacias (including *Acacia penninervis* and *A. salicina*), coolibah (*Eucalyptus coolibah*), gidgee (*A. cambadgei*), black and bimble box (*E. larginflorens* and *E. populnea*) and some river red gum (*E. camaldulensis*). Secondary regrowth is evident across the whole of the site in the form of suckers and young trees.

Several low-lying flat claypans and clearings are subject to flooding, and in the centre of the site is a semi-permanent lagoon, the size and shape of which is subject to seasonal swelling or contraction. A flat, cleared area that abuts this lagoon contains a large open scatter of artefacts, and the remains of structures that have been erected on the sandhills in the north-west and south-eastern parts of the site are still evident. Two dams, one in the south and one to the north of the settlement, provide water for sheep. The locations of two former cemeteries, one on the northern sandhill, the other on one of the southern sandhills, have been made known to DEC staff and have been fenced to stop sheep from walking over the now unmarked graves. An aerial photograph marked with the features of the site is shown in Figure 8.2.

METHODS

A broad outline of the methods employed in this study is discussed in Chapter 3. After an initial trip to meet and discuss the project with members of various local communities in Goodooga, Brewarrina, Weilmoringle and Bourke, I undertook a preliminary site visit to Dennawan to familiarise myself with the place and develop a strategy for mapping the archaeology of the former reserve site. On all site visits, I was accompanied by Arthur Hooper, a senior Muruwari man who lived at Dennawan as a child (now resident in Brewarrina), and on many occasions by Phillip Sullivan, Aboriginal sites officer with the DEC's Western Aboriginal Heritage Unit. I was assisted on this trip by Josie Byno, Vera Nixon, Dorothy Kelly and John Kelly who were also frequent participants in field survey. I met and discussed the project with landowners Len and Beryl Davis, who are also

knowledgeable about the place and added greatly to my appreciation of the site. Later visits were made in the company of Roy and June Barker and Ted Fields. Ranger Rita Enke also assisted in field survey on several occasions.

After the preliminary site visit I put together a general list of artefact types present on the site. From this list I developed an artefact database of the major categories of artefacts organised in a hierarchical structure that was loaded onto a handheld computer (Husky FS2 with FAMlog) connected to a sub-decimeter differential GPS system (using twin Reliance 12 channel Super C/A receivers). This database was used to record the locations of all artefacts that were visible on the surface of the site to an average horizontal spatial accuracy of less than ± 4 centimeters over several field trips.

The artefact database was developed on the basis of my prior experience working on similar sites in Western Australia (Harrison 2000a; 2002c), particularly in terms of recording knapped bottle glass artefacts (Harrison 2000b), in consultation with Arthur Hooper. The database was developed to provide sufficient levels of data to map the location and spread of particular artefact types across the settlement, while not recording so much data that the task of working through the menus on the datalogger would be onerous and overly time-consuming.

The site was recorded over approximately 22 days spread over four separate field trips during 2001 and 2002. In addition to these trips I visited the site on two other occasions. This meant that I had the chance to see the site in different conditions, including when wet. Visibility was not uniform across the site. Small artefacts were particularly difficult to identify on the sandhills, which were more heavily vegetated and which concealed small artefacts in their loose sediments. (The aerial photograph reproduced as Figure 8.2 gives an indication of the vegetation cover across the site.) Despite these constraints, I am confident that the survey data produced is a relatively accurate representation of the spatial distribution of particular artefact types across the settlement, and that most artefacts have been mapped as part of this detailed mapping process. Where I do not believe this to have been the case, I have made a note to that effect in the text.

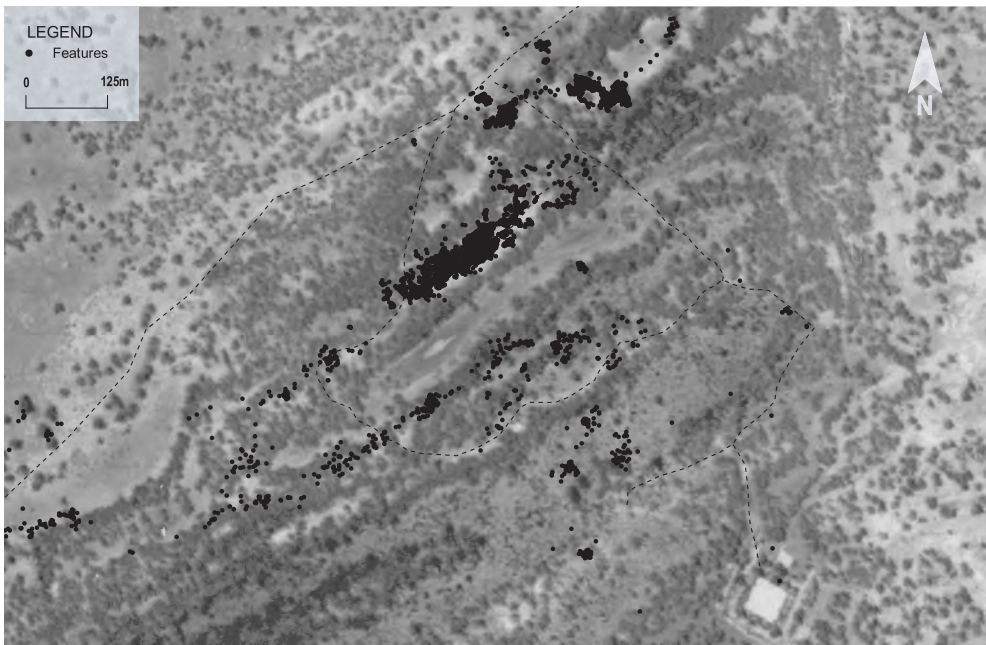


FIGURE 8.3 Spatial distribution of all artefact classes and features at the Dennawan site.

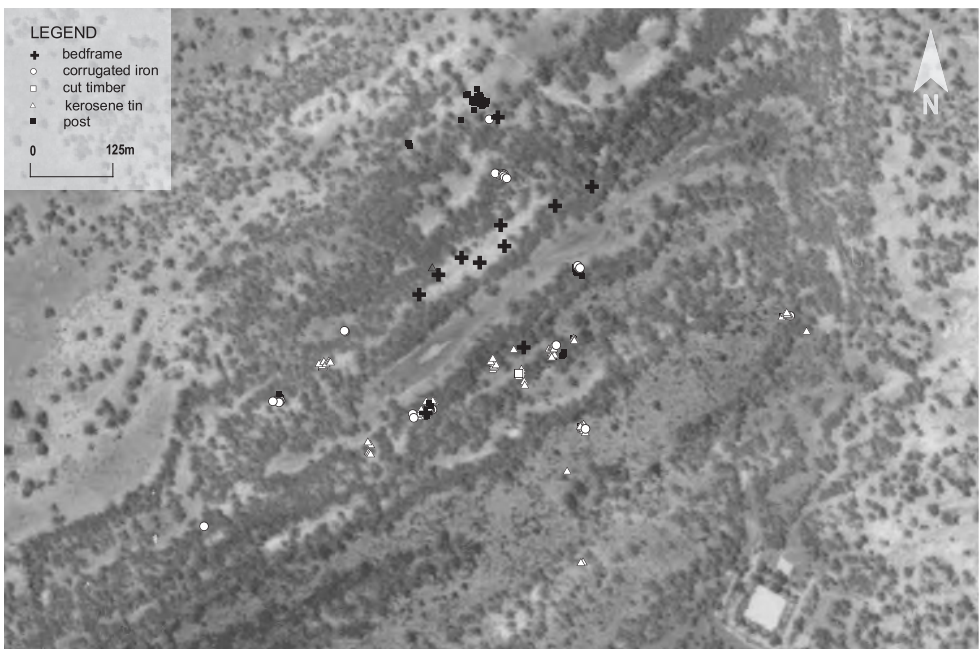


FIGURE 8.4 Location of structural remains at Dennawan.

DISTRIBUTION OF ARTEFACTS AT DENNAWAN

A total number of 7961 discrete features were recorded in the artefact database at Dennawan. Maps showing the spatial distribution of major artefact classes across the site were produced in ArcVIEW GIS from field survey differential GPS data. A series of maps have been reproduced in this book, which act as representations of the GIS maps at a fixed scale (generally approximately 1:10 000). It should be noted that the digital 'maps' can be viewed at any spatial scale, and displayed with any number of variables, in addition to using the GIS software to analyse the data statistically. The value of collecting the data in such a way is not just in being able to produce maps, but in being able to interrogate the data in a range of different and spatially intuitive ways. The constraints of reproducing maps with thousands of individual points displayed on them in a book this size will be evident. However it should be kept in mind that the maps in the book are simply representations of digital data. The maps are illustrated here to demonstrate broad spatial trends in the distribution of various artefact classes across the space of the former settlement. These spatial trends allow us to reconstruct certain aspects of the chronology and spatial organisation of the former reserve site.

STRUCTURAL REMAINS

The structural remains at the site (Figure 8.4) include both standing and fallen wooden posts, flattened kerosene tins that were used for the roofing and walls of houses, and corrugated iron sheeting. The plan of portion WL 958, dated 17 September 1920 (see Chapter 7) shows the location of Mrs Gaffney's shop and the second location of the Bourah Hotel, which allows the concentrated set of wooden posts at the northern part of the site to be firmly identified as the post office and store. The only structural remains that could be located on the site that may be associated with the hotel was a single door fitting found in the extreme north-west of the site in the approximate area indicated by the portion plan.

Most of the structural features at the site consist of the standing remains of coolabah bush poles associated with a scatter of fallen timbers, flattened kerosene tins and other

domestic debris on the two southern sandhills. Oral and written accounts of this and similar camps in western New South Wales describe the construction of houses – or humpies, myamys and gunyahs – in a similar way.

Although no contemporary photographs of the houses built by Aboriginal people at Dennawan remain, June Barker was able to provide a photograph taken in 1932 of her mother and father at Cummeragunja Mission, shortly before they moved to Dennawan, showing a building that is constructed in a similar way to the way in which she recalls the houses at Dennawan being built (see Figure 8.5). The house in the photograph is constructed on a bush-pole frame held together with twisted fencing wire. The walls of the house are made from lime-washed hessian bags and flattened kerosene tins, while the roof is pitched and also made from kerosene tins. June and her sister Gloria recall the inside walls of the houses at Dennawan being lined with newspapers. Photographs of various houses on the settlement taken during the 1950s and 1970s, after the settlement was abandoned, confirm that the houses at Dennawan were built in a similar manner to the contemporary structures at Cumeragunja.

With the exception of the post office, store and former hotel site, almost all of the structures at Dennawan are thought to be houses constructed by the Aboriginal residents of the former reserve.

One exception is the remains of a cyprus-pine framed house in the north of the settlement, which is thought on the basis of oral accounts to have been the mission house built by AIM during the 1930s. It is built on the vicinity of the former Tatala police station, which was probably dismantled in the 1920s. It is possible that some of the original building materials from the police station were re-used in the construction of the mission house. It should be noted that the mission house was carefully constructed immediately outside of the area of the gazetted Aboriginal reserve. AIM archives document tension between the mission and the Aborigines Protection Board regarding the construction of mission buildings on Aboriginal reserves. This pattern of the construction of mission buildings immediately adjacent to the area of a reserve seems to have most often been the way that the mission got around the strict board policies. According to oral accounts, the missionary Miss Bailey most often camped on the travelling stock-route, so that she could live amongst the Aboriginal people who camped there and on the reserve proper.

I mapped several of the structures in more detail, particularly those where the floor plan could be conjectured. These have been named according to oral accounts of the people who built or lived in them (see further discussion in Chapter 9). The use of flattened kerosene tins as roofing and walling material suggested that where concentrations of flattened kerosene tins were recorded, even in the absence of standing timber posts, they should be recorded as potential house sites. This is reflected by my reconstruction of the locations of former house sites shown later in Figure 9.4, derived from the data shown in Figure 8.4. This reconstruction suggests that there were at least 18 houses on the reserve, in addition to the post office and store, mission house, and hotel buildings. This number is consistent with the estimated population of the reserve, although it remains possible, given the advanced state of decay of many of the houses, that the location of some houses can no longer be determined (see further discussion in Chapter 9). The remains of the 11 metal bed frames recorded tended to be associated with structures (Figure 8.4).

Granny Bailey's house is typical of the remaining house sites on the reserve, consisting of the remains of a single-roomed dwelling with bough shelter, now represented only by a series of standing coolibah posts and a scatter of flattened kerosene tins. The Wallace house differs from some of the others in that it appears to have had two rooms and two bough shelters. Other houses mapped in detail include a house that was possibly lived in by the Waites family (Figures 8.6–8.11).

FIGURE 8.5 Duncan and Blanche Ferguson with baby June at Cummeragunja, c 1932. The house behind them, like the houses at Dennawan, is built using flattened kerosene tins on the roof and walls. (Courtesy June Barker)





FIGURE 8.6 (left) Granny Bailey's house.

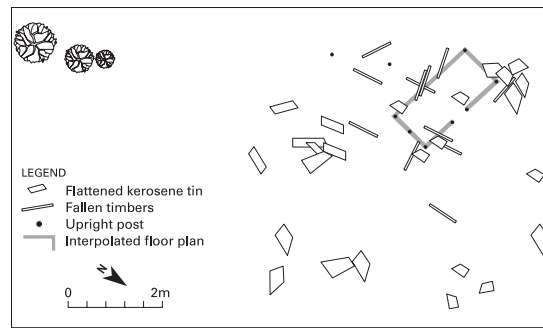


FIGURE 8.7 (right) Site plan of the remains of Granny Bailey's house.

The remains of the post office and store were also mapped in detail, and bear further consideration here. The site consists of a series of low wooden stumps surrounded by the remains of a fence marked by posts. Arthur Hooper recalls that the post office and store was a two-roomed structure with an extension to the back, forming an 'L' shape. It had a water tank to one side which caught rainwater run-off from its corrugated iron roof.

STONE ARTEFACTS

177 flaked and 14 ground-stone artefacts were recorded during the survey (Figure 8.14). Stone artefacts clustered almost exclusively on the flat open area that fringes the large lagoon in the middle of the site on the area that was gazetted as the travelling stock-route. Artefacts included both debitage – the stone flakes and chips produced while knapping a stone tool – and retouched stone tools. All flaked stone artefacts were made on silcretes with the exception of five flaked chert artefacts.

TABLE 8.1 Numbers of different flaked stone artefact types recorded at Dennawan.

TYPE	NUMBER	TYPE	NUMBER
flake	69	retouched flake	12
broken flake	40	adze	1
flake fragment	17	backed blade	3
debris	2	scraper	2
core	31	upper grinding	2
ground-axe	2	indeterminate ground pieces	10

BOTTLE GLASS

5188 fragments of broken bottle glass were recording during the survey (Figure 8.16). Glass was distributed across the whole of the settlement at Dennawan, but was concentrated in three main locations: a bottle dump associated with the hotel site, the hotel site itself, and the flat clearing that abuts the main lagoon in the centre of the settlement. A general scatter of glass fragments extends across the settlement and in between these three main areas.

The relatively rapid 'revolution' in the mechanisation of the glass container manufacturing industry that occurred over the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Miller and Sullivan 1984) makes glass bottles sensitive chronological markers on Australian historical archaeological sites. However, 'dating' individual pieces of broken bottle glass can be a



FIGURE 8.8 (left) Emma Wallace's house.

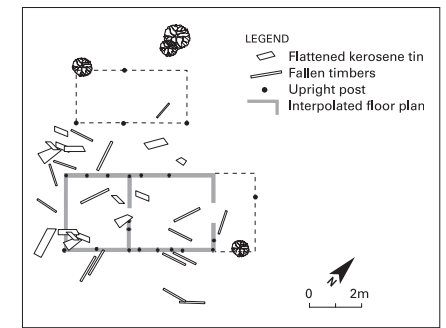


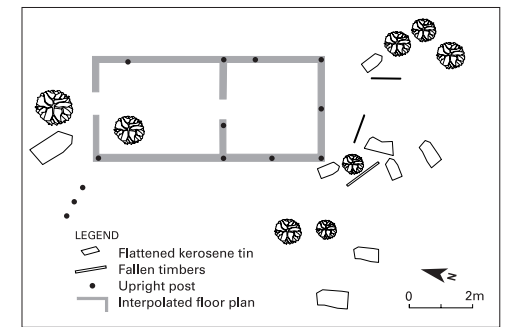
FIGURE 8.9 (right) Site plan of the remains of Emma Wallace's house.

difficult exercise, as identification of manufacturing marks on the bottle and the shape of the container form the two main indicators for dating bottle glass. Given the survey's time limitations and the large numbers of broken bottle pieces spread across the site, it was decided to record only the colour of individual glass fragments – although general notes on identifiable chronological markers were made. Bottle glass colour shows a close association with container function (Jones and Sullivan 1985), and can be used to establish a rough chronology of bottle types present, as demonstrated by Birmingham (2000) in her study of the Killalpaninna mission in Central Australia. Although there are more detailed ways of recording bottle features associated with different manufacturing techniques on glass that would provide more accurate chronological information on the date of their manufacture, using this rough relative dating system matched speed and ease of identification with enough detail to provide basic chronological information which matched the purposes of this study. Glass colours recorded included:

- + black glass – primarily associated with spirit and beer bottles, dating to 1860–1900
- + olive green glass – from turn-and-paste style champagne-shaped ale bottles, dating c 1880–1920
- + 'tint' glass – from spirit bottles, c 1900–1920
- + solarised 'amethyst' glass – c 1900–1912
- + amber and light green glass – predominantly from beer bottles, after 1930
- + colourless glass – from spirits and cordial bottles, mostly after 1930, although some may be older (Boow 1991).

FIGURE 8.10 (left) Harry Waites' house.

FIGURE 8.11 (right) Site plan of the remains of Harry Waites' house.



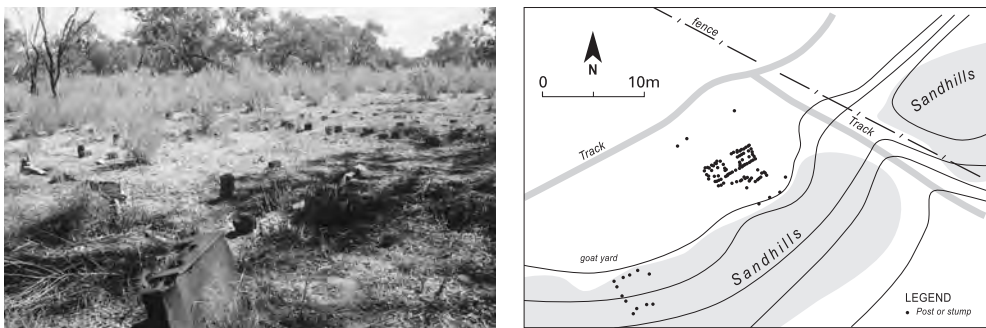


FIGURE 8.12 (left) The remains of Mrs Gaffney's store and post office.
FIGURE 8.13 (right) Site plan of the remains of Mrs Gaffney's store and post office.

Figure 8.17 shows the percentages of different glass colours at Dennawan. The bulk of glass present at this site dates to the period 1880–1940, although the existence of black glass suggests some early activity on the site from 1860–1900. The different glass colours are not distributed evenly across the settlement. Black glass is particularly located on the flat area that abuts the lagoon, and is generally absent from the hotel site and the hotel bottle dump. Other glass colours are more widely distributed. Bottle glass is only sparsely represented around the houses on the sandhills in the south of the site, but where it does occur, it tends not to be black glass, suggesting that the sandhills were settled later than the other parts of the settlement. The general absence of bottle glass on the sandhills is considered to be a result of broken glass being difficult to see on the surface of their loose, sandy deposits.

While some of the glass bottles have obviously been discarded at the settlement after having been used as drink containers, some of them have been flaked into tools by

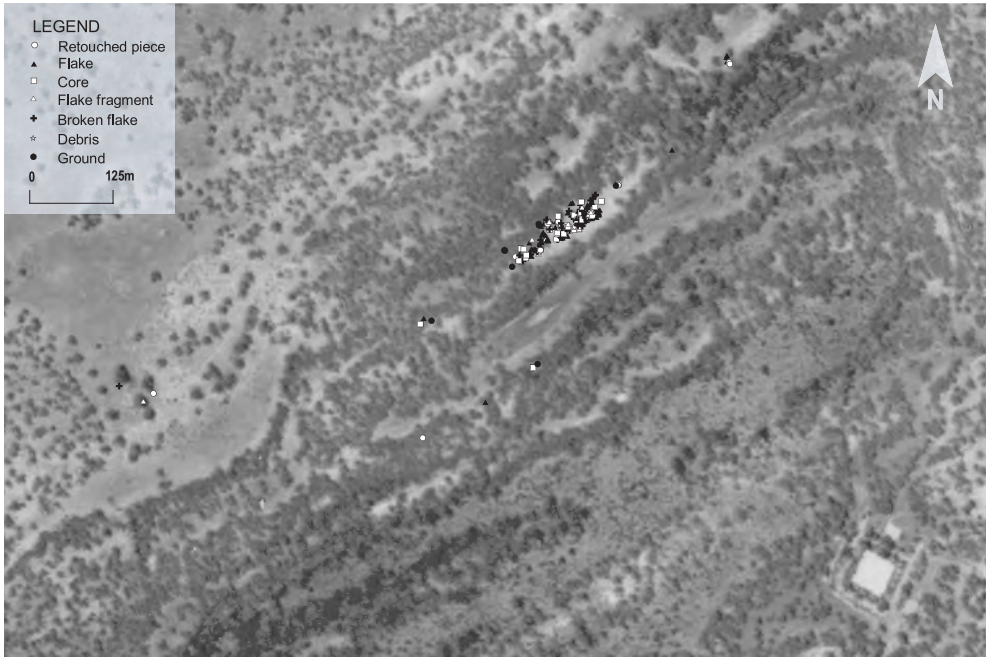


FIGURE 8.14 Distribution of stone artefacts, Dennawan.



FIGURE 8.15 (left) Silcrete core located on flat area abutting lagoon; **(centre)** upper grinding stone located on southern sandhills; **(right)** silcrete tula adze.

Aboriginal people. Many early ethnographers noted the supplementation of bottle and window glass for stone as a raw material for flaking to produce implements throughout Aboriginal Australia following European settlement. As a raw material, glass has higher fracture toughness than most stone materials available for stone tool manufacture in Australia (Harrison 2000b). This means that glass generally flakes more predictably than stone, and forms a sharp flaked edge. These sharp edges were used by Aboriginal people to perform a number of tasks such as cutting meat and vegetables, and scraping wood to make wooden tools.

Other qualities of glass that made it attractive to Aboriginal people for tool manufacture included its ease of availability, and the natural curved edges formed by broken glass shards that were favoured in some areas for use in scraping tasks (Allen 1969; Freeman 1993). Some Aboriginal people valued other qualities of stone raw materials that made glass an attractive alternative. For example, in Arnhem Land and the Kimberley, Aboriginal people

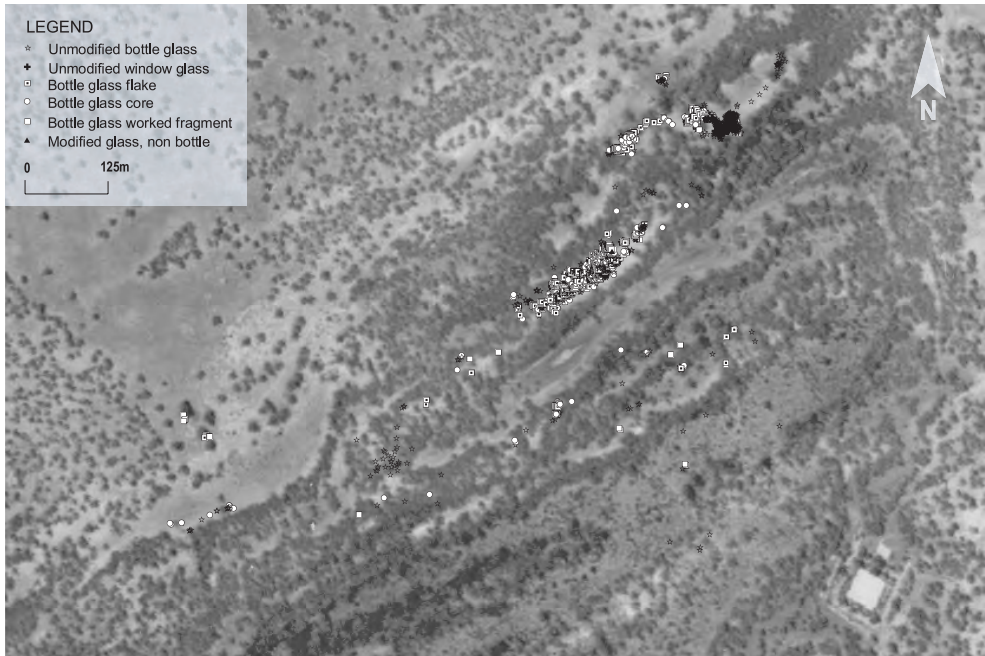


FIGURE 8.16 Distribution of fragments of broken glass, Dennawan.

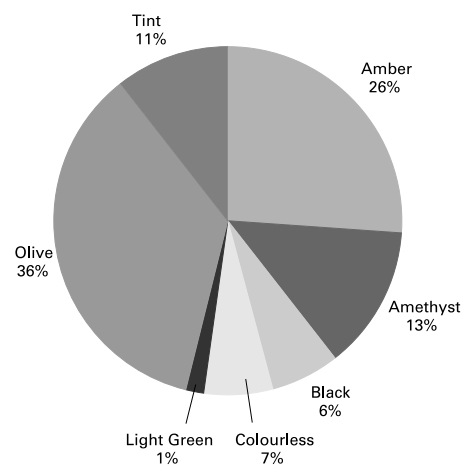


FIGURE 8.17 Percentage of colours of fragments of bottle glass, Dennawan.

stress the importance of colour and lustre in the production of points and long blades (Harrison 2002a).

One of the problems that has been raised by archaeologists regarding glass artefacts is the possibility for glass bottles to break unintentionally and form edges that might look like deliberately knapped ones (Knudson 1979; Allen and Jones 1980; Cooper and Bowdler 1998). Although this factor may not affect the validity of bottle glass as an indicator of the relative age of the site in

which it is found, it would certainly influence the interpretation of the nature of the artefact and the context in which it was found. Williamson (2002) suggests that unintentionally fractured bottle glass can be characterised by flaking on an edge of a tool that is irregular, present on more than one margin, intermittent across the edge of the piece, initiated either from the inside or outside of the bottle, steep (forming edges close to 90 degrees) and often in the form of large, isolated flake scars on the margin of the piece. Obviously there is the potential for some of these features to also be present on intentionally flaked pieces, producing a gradation from clearly unintentionally modified to clearly modified examples. This has suggested the need for regional studies that look for consistent patterns of breakage, tool form and use of glass artefacts that would allow an individual 'potential' glass artefact to be tested against the 'norm' (Harrison 2000b).

Muruwari people continued to make and use flaked bottle-glass tools until the 1960s and 1970s, and the tools made as well as the process of manufacturing them is relatively widely known by many Muruwari people. Ray Gunter, a missionary who has worked with Muruwari people since the late 1960s, remembers Robin Campbell making and using flaked-glass tools for woodworking at his camp in Weilmoringle in the 1970s:

he would sit cross-legged out the front there with a very blunt tomahawk, and he would chip away there at a piece of wood until he got it resembling a boomerang, and then he had these pieces of glass – different sizes – and he wrapped a wad of grass around the end of the glass, so that he wouldn't cut his hand, and he would actually shave off the small shavings of wood down the side of the boomerang until he could smooth it right off. And he could actually smooth it right down until you would think it was done by sandpaper, but he would work away at it very patiently – he was a very patient man at doing it (interview, 8 March 2002).

These scraping tools were made using the side part of a bottle, which was scraped along the length of a wooden object, such as a bundi (a wooden throwing club used for hunting small land game). Another tool was made for cutting, by knapping flakes from the thickened glass at the base of a glass bottle. Josie Byno remembers carrying bits of broken glass bottles as a

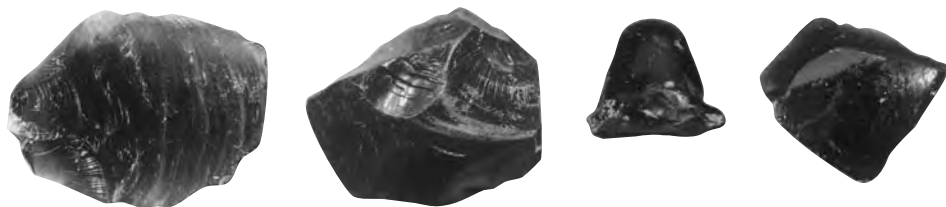


FIGURE 8.18 Glass artefacts: (opposite below, l-r) amber glass flake; olive green bottle base core; olive green glass pontil 'scraper'; olive green worked fragment made on side part of bottle; (above l-r) detail of wooden walking stick made by Robin Campbell c 1970s using glass artefacts; Josie Byno demonstrating the use of a glass flake cutting tool; Josie Byno demonstrating the use of glass scraping tool.

teenager when they would go fishing at the river, and knapping flakes from the glass to gut fish. A tool similar to that used for scraping wooden tools made from the side of a bottle was used to scale the fish. Similar cutting tools were also used for cutting emu, porcupine and kangaroo meat. Most of these flake tools show evidence of having been used, in the form of striations and microchipping on the edge of the tool. Ray Gunter also recalled flaked glass being used to cut meat at Weilmoringle:

They would also use it for cutting – cutting a piece of meat or anything like that, kangaroo ... I saw one of the fellas at Weilmoringle there, he used the edge of a piece of glass with the same pad of grass so that he wouldn't cut himself, but he actually cut through the side of a goanna, to cut a piece of the meat off. So they used it in a lot of different ways (interview, 8 March 2002).

About one quarter of the pieces of bottle glass recorded on Dennawan has been flaked. Flaked-glass artefacts were recorded as either cores, flakes or worked fragments (the scraping tools made on the side part of bottles discussed above). Most of the flaked-glass artefacts at Dennawan are flakes, while cores and worked fragments occur in relatively equal numbers (see Table 8.2). This is consistent with the large numbers of flake fragments that are produced when knapping a flake to be used as a tool from a core, or in retouching the edge of an otherwise unmodified piece of broken glass to be used as a 'scraper'.

TABLE 8.2 Flaked-glass artefact types, Dennawan.

TYPE	NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES
core	391
flake	984
worked fragment	337

Flaked bottle-glass artefacts cluster in two main locations: at the hotel bottle dump (Figure 8.19), and on the flat clearing that fringes the northern margin of the lagoon on the travelling stock-route, with a general spread of artefacts in between these two locations. A smaller number of flaked-glass artefacts is present on the southern sandhills.

A sample of glass artefacts was subjected to more detailed recording. A 2 × 2-metre grid was placed over the glass knapping floor at the hotel dump, and all of the glass artefacts occurring within a randomly selected grid square were analysed in detail. This detailed recording of the glass artefacts shows us that the hotel dump area was clearly a glass



FIGURE 8.19 Schematic plan of the glass knapping floor associated with hotel dump, Dennawan.

artefact flaking and manufacturing area, as both cores and flakes, and retouched fragments of glass are present. It also indicates that there is an internal consistency to the technology of manufacturing bottle glass artefacts at Dennawan, strengthening the interpretation that the other apparently 'flaked' glass scattered across the rest of the settlement has indeed been intentionally flaked.

Some of the broken bottle glass associated with the cemeteries and in the area just below the post office is the product of intentionally shattering bottle glass to decorate the graves in the cemeteries. This phenomenon of decorated grave sites is well known at other Aboriginal cemeteries in western New South Wales, particularly at Collarenebri (Byrne 1998; Goodall 2002), and has also been noted in other places such as amongst indigenous Tongans (Burley 1995). Gloria Matthews remembered the process of heating the glass and then plunging it into cold water so that it shattered:

The glass that you noticed at the old house ... it was there that they used to burn the bottle, the glass that you noticed. They would then put it in a tub of cold water, and it would shatter. And when it cooled down they would put it in a bag, sugar bag, and hit it with a hammer and they would put it on the graves at the cemetery. When I went to Collarenebri later on, I saw the same thing there, where all the shattered glass, the burnt glass, was there on the graves (interview, 17 May 2002).

At Collarenebri, Aboriginal people continue to add glass to the graves on a regular basis to maintain them. This process has not occurred at Dennawan since the 1950s, and it is now difficult to discern the outlines of the graves from the broken glass on the surface, which has shifted to form a general background scatter of broken glass around the cemetery sites.

TIN CANS AND KEROSENE TINS

There were 850 tin cans and containers recorded on the settlement at Dennawan. These were broadly spread over the entire settlement, but were particularly prominent in the sandhills

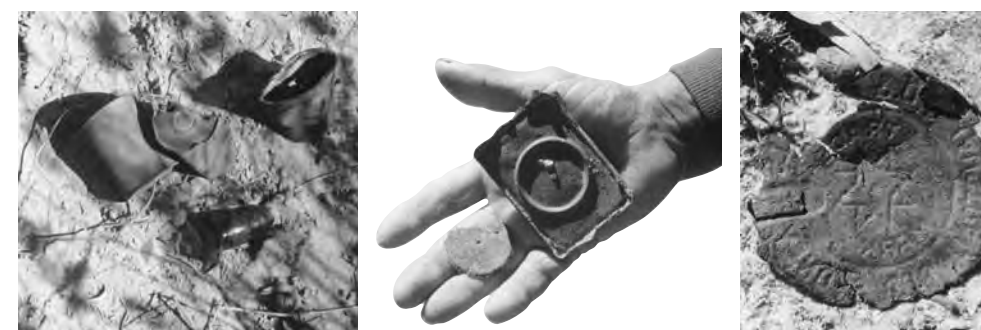


FIGURE 8.20 Food tins, tobacco/match tins and kerosene tins: (above, l-r) press-top lid type tin can, made into pull-along car toy by the addition of fencing wire; hole-in-cap type food container; double-seam sanitary can; hole-in-cap 'gambling tokens'; 'star' brand tobacco tin lid; (below, l-r) tin can mug with twisted wire handle; tobacco tin car toy wheels.

and the flat area that abuts the lagoon. Like bottle glass, tin cans have often been used as chronological indicators by archaeologists in Australia and elsewhere. Five varieties of tinned food containers were recorded on the former settlement. The two most common were:

- + hole-in-cap tins, which have a filler hole in one end, sealed with a tin-plate cap that has a pin-hole vent in its centre, common from the 1840s up until 1910–1920 (Rock 1984; Ritchie 1986)
- + double-seam sanitary cans of varying sizes, common from 1910–1920 until the present.

Other types include:

- + key-wind opened oval tins (which commonly contained fish meat), dating to after 1895
- + hole-in-top cans, with a single pin hole or matchstick filler hole (commonly condensed milk tins), dating from 1900
- + tins with press-top lids (commonly containing powdered milk) which have been made in America since the 1820s, but became common in Australia and New Zealand after 1890, and have been in use until the present.

In addition to food containers, tobacco tins and wax match tins were also located. Tobacco tins tended to be found in a corroded state, so that few features could be discerned on the object. Only two diagnostic types of tobacco tins were recovered. The first is the 'star' brand tobacco with distinctive raised star on the lid. These were manufactured by W D and H O Wills Australia Ltd, Sydney. The reverse of these tins contain the words 'Capstan Navy cut fine tobacco'. This company was founded 1901, and advertisements for the product began appearing in Sydney newspapers in 1902. It ceased sales in the 1930s.



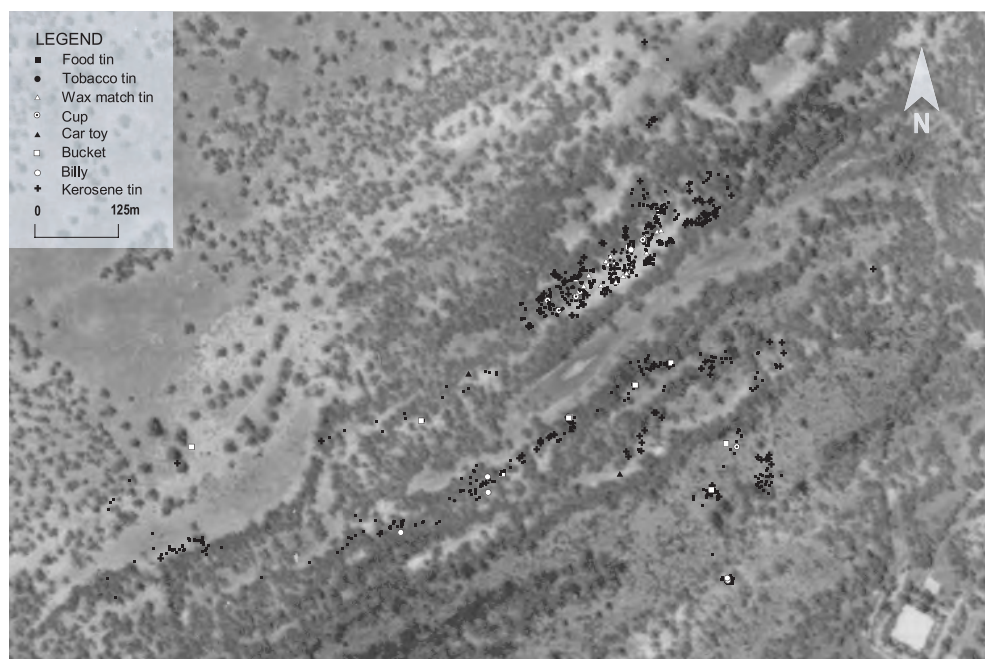


FIGURE 8.21 Distribution of tin cans and kerosene tins, Dennawan.

The other type of tobacco tin was unembossed, but was round with an internal threaded screw-top. Such tobacco tins were common from the Second World War, and in use until the 1970s. Small metal embossed advertising tabs from tobacco tins were also noted at Dennawan. Two diagnostic tab types were identified, with the inscriptions 'Havelock' and 'Sunlight' respectively. The 'Havelock' tag belongs to a subsidiary of the W D and H O Wills company.

Eighteen 'wax vesta' tin matchboxes were located on Dennawan. Wax vestas are friction matches of the 'strike anywhere' variety, and were in common use between 1832 and just after the Second World War (Anson 1983). All wax vestas boxes were the no 4 size box. Diagnostic types included the R Bell and Co no 4 type tin, and the Bryant and May wax vesta London tin. Anson's chronology dates both types of tin between 1880 and 1920.

TABLE 8.3 Numbers of tin cans and associated artefacts, Dennawan.

ARTEFACT TYPE	NUMBER	ARTEFACT TYPE	NUMBER
Billy	7	Unmodified food tin	728
Bucket	10	Unmodified tobacco tin	51
Car toy	10	Kerosene tin bucket	28
Cup	7	Kerosene tin meat safe	4
Match tin	18	Unmodified kerosene tin	100

Some of these tins had been re-used by Aboriginal people to make other useful items. Tin cans and kerosene tins were, with the addition of a piece of wire threaded through the top, re-used as buckets and billys, while tin cans could also be made into cups by the addition of a wire handle that was wrapped around the body of the cup. Pull-along car toys were made using tobacco tins for wheels. Similar artefacts have been described at other historical Aboriginal sites in New South Wales and elsewhere (eg Kabaila 1995: 8; Harrison 2002b).



FIGURE 8.22 Kerosene tin artefacts: (left) square-sided kerosene tin firebucket, (centre) round kerosene tin bucket; (right) flattened kerosene tins used as roofing and walling materials for houses at Dennawan.

Arthur Hooper recalled that people used the inside cap of hole-in-cap tins as gambling tokens when they did not have coins or cash. Table 8.3 shows the numbers and types of tin cans and modifications to them that were mapped at Dennawan.

Where kerosene tins had been flattened for their use as walling material for houses, they have been recorded under the structural category (see Figure 8.4). Kerosene tins were also found in an unmodified state, and in use as buckets and firebuckets. Kerosene tin buckets were made in the same way as the billys described above. A firebucket was made by putting hatchet holes in the side of a kerosene tin, and heaping coals into the tin. It was used to keep warm, and, with the addition of a grill, to cook over. I recorded 28 buckets and firebuckets at Dennawan. Kerosene tins were also made into meat safes, by cutting out a square from each side and replacing it with wire mesh, over which a wet cloth was placed. This was hung in a tree away from the reach of animals. Four kerosene meat safes were recorded at Dennawan.

Kerosene tins and tin cans tend to be spatially associated with structures at Dennawan. This is relatively easy to understand, as they constitute everyday domestic refuse. Tinned food was purchased or issued as rations from Mrs Gaffney's store at Dennawan:

we used to get our rations here, from Granny Bailey, only boiled lollies and flour and sugar and tea ... things like that ... and big tins of bully-beef, stuff like that. And they used to get the bread from Goodooga when they came down every week. Twice a week they used to come down here, Tuesdays and Saturdays (Arthur Hooper interview, 18 Nov 2001).

TABLEWARE

This category of artefacts comprises ceramic and enamelled artefacts, mostly used in dining or domestic settings, cutlery, and cooking and kitchen equipment. Although they comprise a broad range of artefact types they are considered together as all represent artefacts used in a domestic, or household context. Tablewares were distributed relatively evenly across all areas of the former reserve site, with clustering of artefacts near the flat camping area on the travelling stock route, and in the area surrounding the post office and store. The following section describes these artefacts and their spatial distribution in more detail.

CERAMIC ARTEFACTS

There were 464 pieces of broken ceramic and 16 pieces of insulator porcelain found on the settlement. It was not possible to record all of the ceramic types in detail. Much of the ceramic was found on the flat area that abuts the large lagoon to the north on the travelling stock-route, so I recorded a sample of the ceramic wares in this part of the site in an area 20 × 20 metre square in the central part of the clearing. This appeared to be broadly representative of the types of ceramics found elsewhere on the settlement.

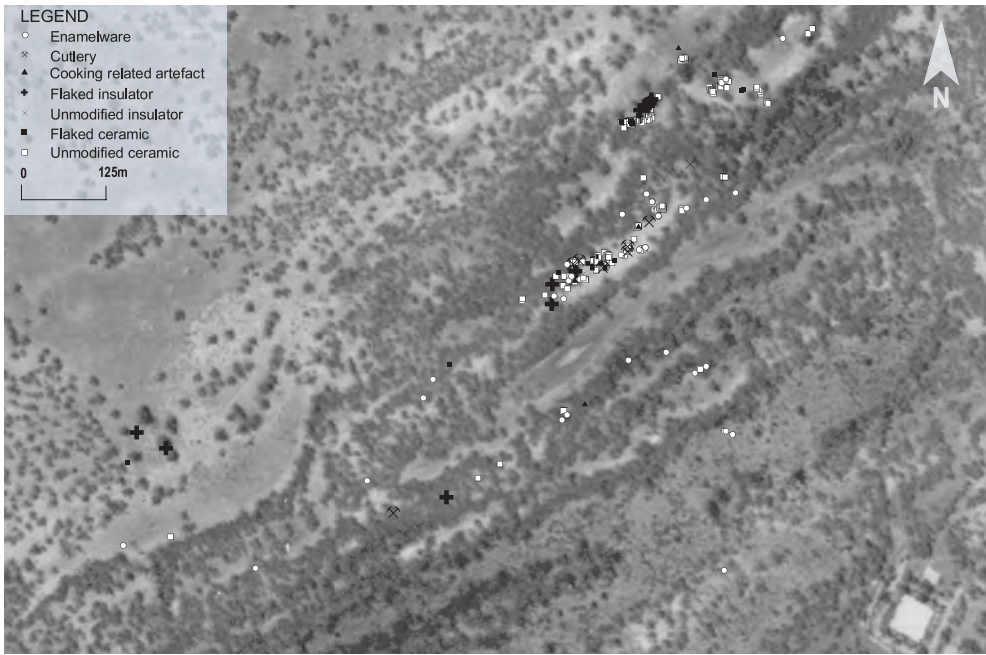


FIGURE 8.23 The location of cutlery, ceramics and enamelwares, Dennawan.

TABLE 8.4 Type and number of ceramic tableware fragments in sample area at Dennawan.

CERAMIC TABLEWARES	NUMBER AND TYPE
Blue transferware willow pattern	4 plate fragments
Brown transferware floral pattern	9 plate fragments
Blue transferware floral pattern	6 plate fragments
White porcelain	5 teacup fragments
	8 plate fragments
	1 bowl fragment
Plain blue glazed stoneware	3 fragments
Plain white glazed stoneware	49 fragments
Ginger beer bottle or demijohn glazed stoneware	13 fragments

Some of this ceramic showed traces of having been knapped and used for cutting or scraping tasks by Aboriginal people on the reserve. Almost all of the insulator porcelain appeared to have been knapped (14 out of 16 pieces were modified), while a much smaller proportion (27 out of 437 pieces) of ceramic tableware had been knapped. Of note were several ‘backed blades’ made on a section of white plain glazed stoneware plate, which utilised the heel of the plate as a natural edge that was emphasised using bi-directional flaking (Figure 8.24).

The use of some of the tableware to manufacture flaked tools suggests that the deposition of pieces of ceramic crockery cannot be taken at face value as evidence for their use as tablewares alone. Having said that, only a small proportion was knapped, and the occurrence of conjoinable pieces close by one another in the sample recorded above would suggest that the plates and teacup fragments were once part of mixed dinner services. While many of the fragments of ceramic tablewares are plain white glazed stoneware – which was relatively

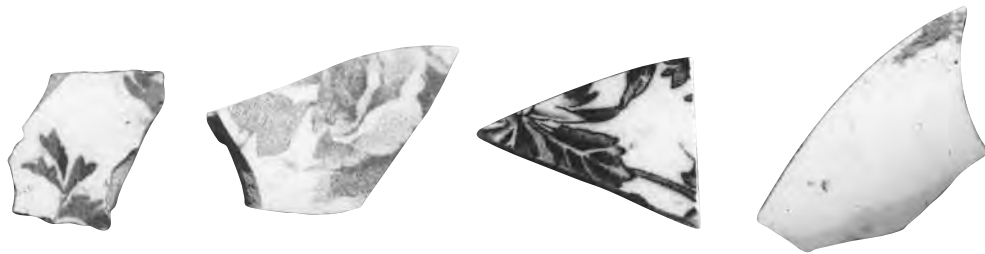


FIGURE 8.24 Ceramics: (above, l-r) blue transferware ‘willow’ type pattern plate fragment; brown transferware floral pattern plate fragment; blue transferware floral pattern plate fragment; white porcelain plate fragment; (below, l-r) plain white glazed stoneware plate fragment; glazed stoneware ginger beer bottle; ‘backed blade’ made on white stoneware ceramic fragment.

common and cheap to purchase – the occurrence of decorated ceramic tablewares on the site suggests that Aboriginal people on the reserve had some disposable wealth with which to buy occasional luxury consumer items.

ENAMELWARE

In addition to ceramics, 43 pieces of enamelled metal tableware were recorded. These included milk jugs, mugs, plates, teapots, buckets, saucepans and wash basins (Table 8.5 and Figure 8.25).

TABLE 8.5 Different types of enamelware recorded at Dennawan.

TYPE	NUMBER
Bowl	1
Wash basin	2
Cup	12
Milk jug	1
Plate	7
Other	20
Total	43

Although enamelled tablewares are commonly thought to be cheap and associated with the working classes today, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a single unit of enamelled tableware was much more expensive to purchase than its stoneware counterpart (Franzen 1995). Enamelled tablewares lasted much longer, and this may have justified the initial purchase price of these relatively expensive items.

Unlike ceramic tableware, fragments of which were most commonly found on the flat clearing fronting the large lagoon in the middle of the settlement, enamelled tablewares

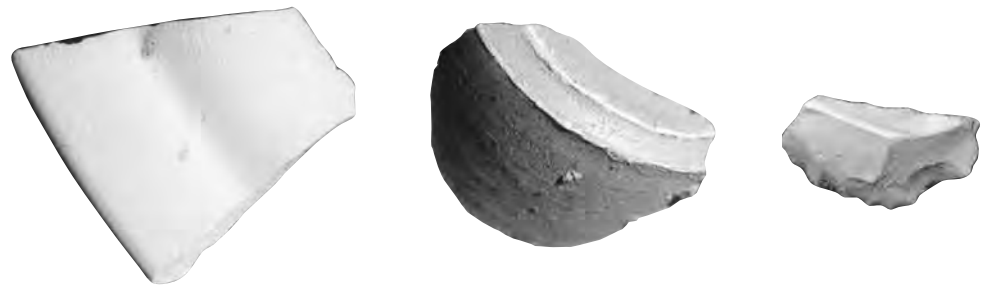




FIGURE 8.25 Enamelware: (left) hand-painted enamelled teapot; (centre) enamel chamberpot; (right, l-r) scatter of enamelled tableware cup, cup, saucepan, bucket.

were distributed across the settlement. However, the most likely explanation for this is that ceramic tablewares were more difficult to see on the sandy surface of the sandhills in the southern part of the settlement, so were not picked up during the survey.

CUTLERY

There were eight items of cutlery noted during the survey. These included two forks, two knives, one teaspoon and three spoons (Figure 8.23, page 182). The low frequency of finds of cutlery is most likely a reflection of the relatively poor durability of such items.

COOKING RELATED ARTEFACTS

A number of cooking-related artefacts were identified during the survey, including two hand mincers, three cast-iron camp-oven lids, and two cast-iron frypan pieces (Figure 8.23).

PERSONAL ITEMS

The personal items recorded during field survey included clay pipes, clothing fasteners and items related to the production of music.

CLAY PIPES

Six fragments of clay smoking pipes were located on Dennawan, of which four were the stem parts, and two were bowls. Four of these were found on the flat cleared area fronting the lagoon. Some of the stems had evidence of maker's marks, although none could be identified due to their fragmentary nature. Clay pipe fragments were located on the flat area that abuts the lagoon, and on the northern sandhill near the cemetery (Figure 8.26).

CLOTHING RELATED ITEMS

Clothing-related items mapped on the former reserve included metal boot plates, buckles and work trouser buttons. Once again, these artefacts tended to be located on the flat clearing that abuts the lagoon, and in the area surrounding the post office and store (Figure 8.26). Table 8.6 lists the numbers of different clothing-related artefacts located while mapping the former settlement.

TABLE 8.6 Number and types of clothing-related items, Dennawan.

CLOTHING RELATED ITEM	NUMBER	CLOTHING RELATED ITEM	NUMBER
Boot plate	2	Iron bases	8
Buckle	23	Other	7
Buttons	22		

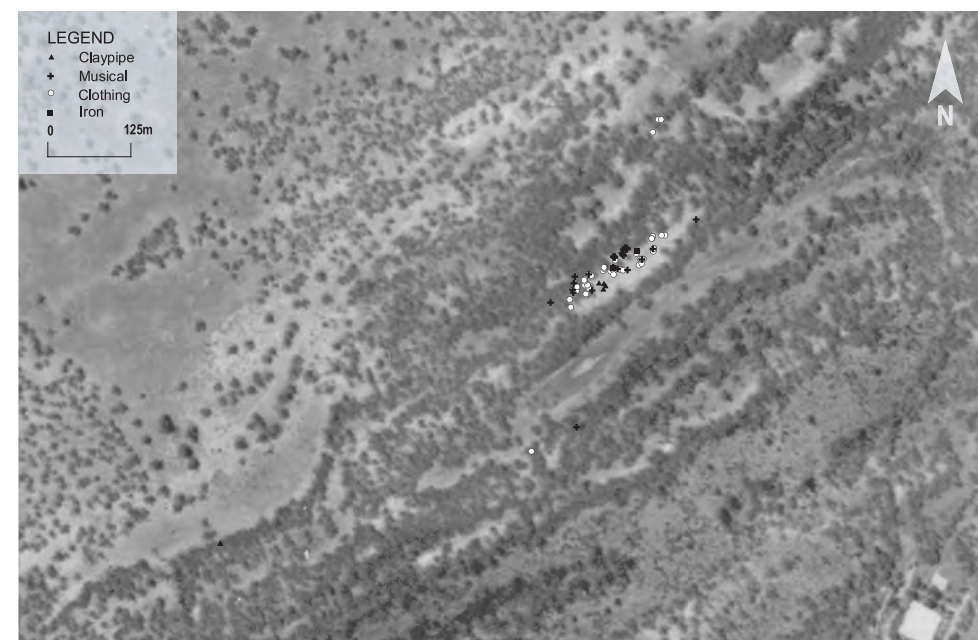


FIGURE 8.26 (above) Location of personal items, Dennawan.

FIGURE 8.27 (below, l-r) Personal items: a brooch; work trouser button; clay pipe stem.

In addition to these metal clothing fastenings, other clothing-related finds included the bases of irons for ironing clothing, and decorative items including a brooch, pieces of a pocket watch, and glass beads. These very private items provide a poignant insight into the personal lives of the Aboriginal people who lived at Dennawan until it was abandoned in the early 1940s.

MUSICAL ITEMS

The distinctly Aboriginal musical tradition of western New South Wales has recently been examined in *Buried Country* (Walker 2000). European musical instruments were incorporated by Aboriginal people into 'traditional' ceremonies and songs. In the days before television and radio, gramophone records and musical instruments were important forms of entertainment. The remains of old records and harmonica pieces were frequent finds at Dennawan. A gramophone arm and spring was also located near the house that abuts the main lagoon, where many of the other items were also found (Figure 8.28). The occurrence of the gramophone handle associated with one of the houses on the sandhill suggests that this pattern is due to visibility biases rather than a real pattern, and that musical instruments and records were probably also played in other parts of the settlement.





FIGURE 8.28 Musical items: (left) 'Boomerang' brand mouth organ cover; (right) gramophone arm.

METAL OBJECTS

Metal handtools – including shovel blades, hand cut from sections of kerosene tin, and car springs, used as digging and adzing tools – were located along with manufactured handtools such as axeheads, shearing blades and files. Machinery – predominantly car parts from several vehicles including at least two Model T Fords and two other unidentified vehicles – were also recorded on the former reserve site. These were spread relatively widely across the former reserve (Figure 8.29).

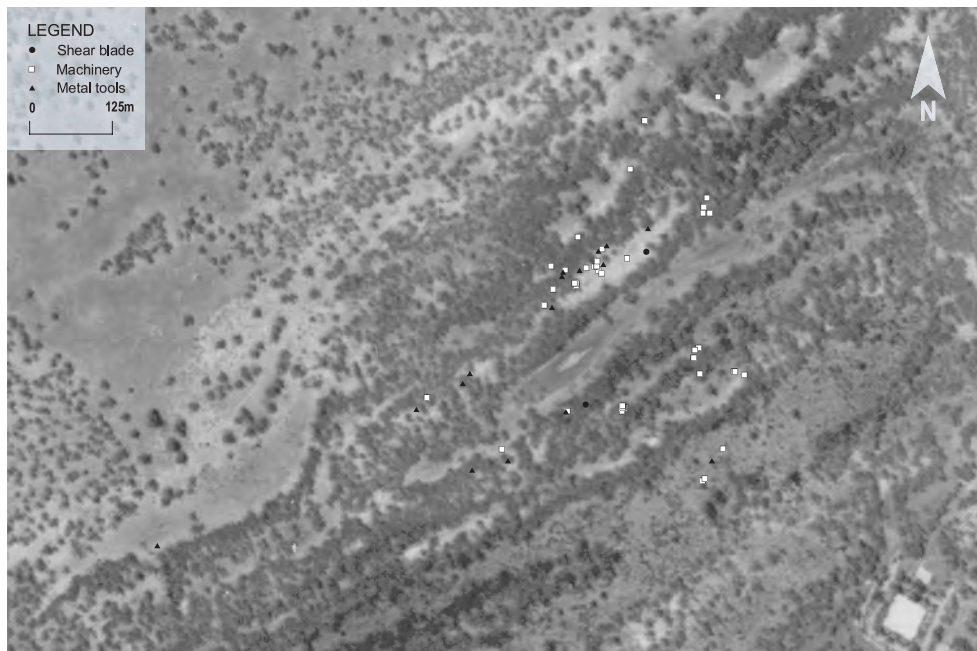


FIGURE 8.29 Location of metal objects and hand tools, Dennawan.

There were 321 pieces of wire recorded at Dennawan. Wire was used in a number of different ways, including in building construction, as billy handles and as fire hooks (for taking billies off an open fire). Small sections of wire were cut for use in pegging out kangaroo and possum skins (Roy Barker, pers comm). Wire pieces occurred most commonly on the flat cleared area fronting the main lagoon (Figure 8.32). This spatial patterning may reflect issues of visibility on the sandhills, as all of the houses employed fencing wire in their construction.



FIGURE 8.30 Metal objects: (above, l-r) shearing blade; hand-made shovel blade;

FIGURE 8.31 Miscellaneous artefacts: (below, l-r) 1920 half penny; horse blinker; pocket watch cog.

MISCELLANEOUS ARTEFACTS

Numerous pieces of metal artefacts associated with horse saddlery were located at Dennawan. These items included a blinker, metal rings and buckles, a stirrup, horseshoes, and a buggy wheel (Figure 8.32).

A range of other miscellaneous objects were recorded across the site which could not otherwise be categorised in the database (Table 8.7 and Figures 8.31 and 8.33).

TABLE 8.7 Miscellaneous artefacts, Dennawan.

OBJECT TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Coins	1920 half penny; 1905 half penny
Kerosene lamp base	Brass lamp base
Ink jar	Glass ink bottle
Rabbit trap	spring-type trap
Sewing machine base	Cast-iron sewing machine legs
Rifle barrel	Single barrel

THE FIRST BOURAH HOTEL SITE

The first Bourah Hotel, constructed around 1880 and destroyed by fire at the turn of the century (see Chapter 7), was located approximately 2 kilometres to the east of the former Dennawan Reserve (see Figure 8.34). Today the site consists of a scatter of melted glass and charred ceramic, spread across a low rise on a sandhill in association with the remains of a fence, stallion yard and well. The location of the former hotel buildings appears to be marked by two roughly rectangular charcoal 'stains' in the sand on the hill, each measuring approximately 4 × 8 metres. On the north-eastern edge of the sandhill are the remains of



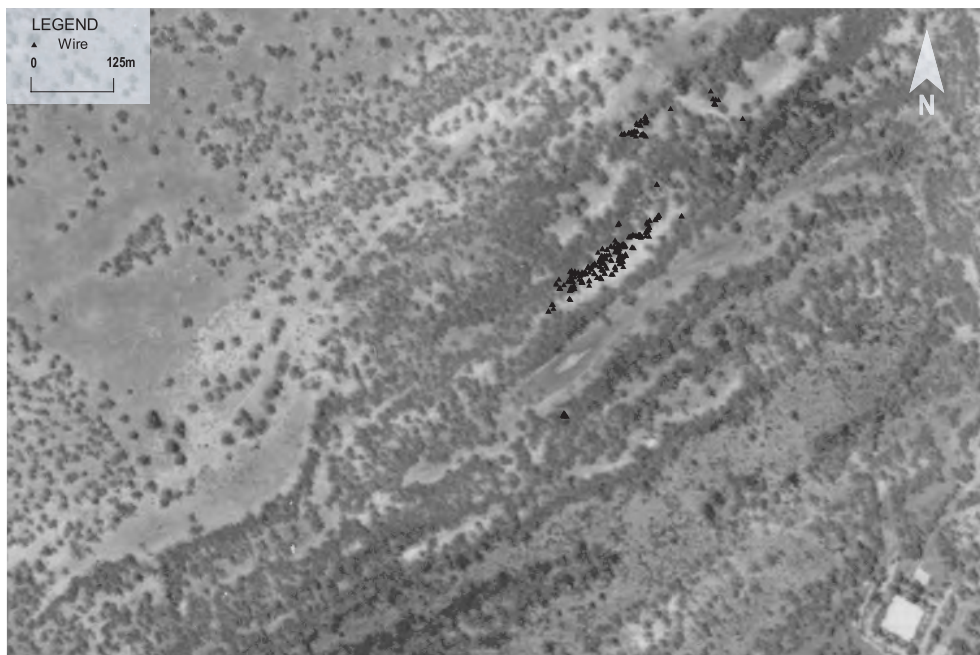
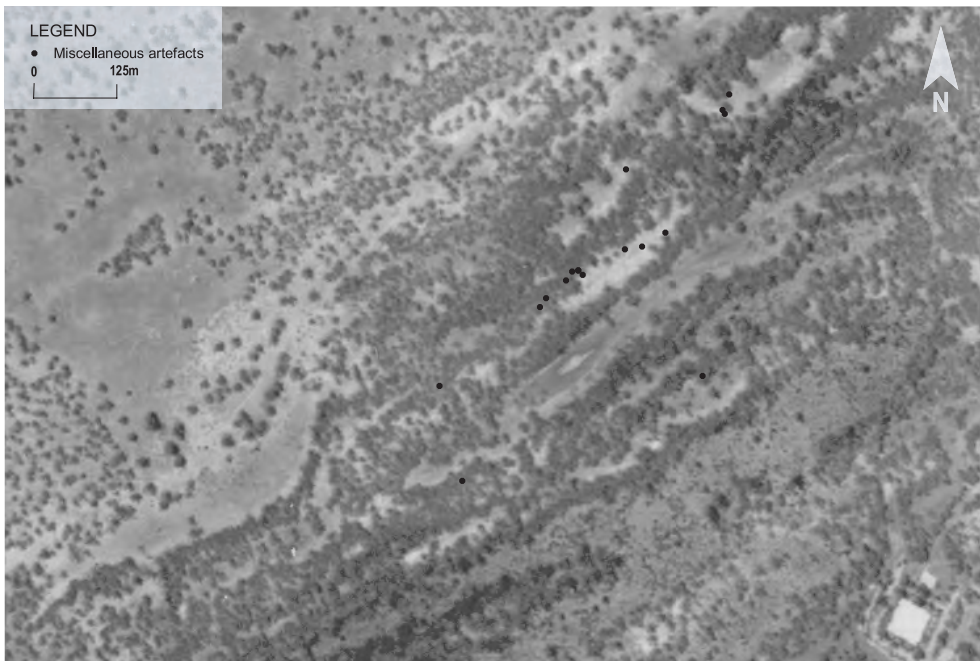


FIGURE 8.32 (above) Location of wire, Dennawan.
FIGURE 8.33 (below) Miscellaneous items, Dennawan.



what appears to be another house site which is not marked on the 1880s portion plan of the site (see Figures 7.20 and 7.21).

The individual artefacts at this site were not mapped; however a general site plan is reproduced in Figure 8.36, along with individual detailed plans of the remains of the stallion yard and well – which are the main extant features. Some flaked glass artefacts were noted

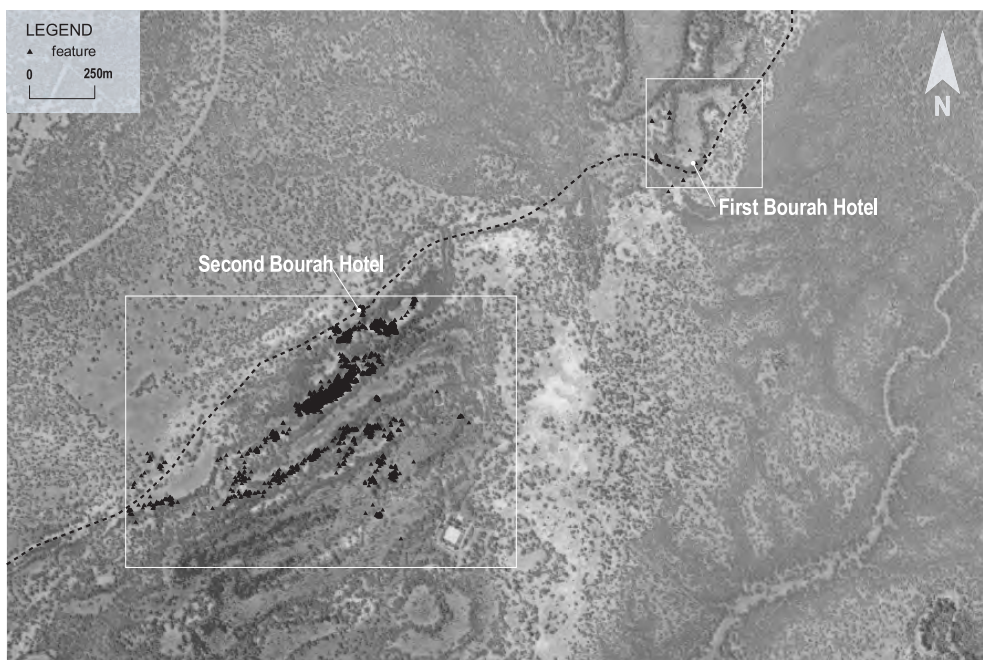


FIGURE 8.34 (above) The location of first Bourah Hotel and its relationship with the former Dennawan Reserve.
FIGURE 8.35 (below left) View across the first Bourah Hotel site, showing burnt patches in the sand.
FIGURE 8.36 (below right) Site plan of the first Bourah Hotel.

at the base of the sandhill and near the well, although these formed essentially a background scatter, rather than a concentration which might indicate the location of a permanent Aboriginal settlement like that at Dennawan itself. A small scatter of stone artefacts and hearths is located on an exposure approximately 200 metres to the south of the sandhill, while a series of scarred trees and stone artefact scatters are located along the track that runs north of the sandhill (English 1997).

WHAT DOES ARCHAEOLOGY TELL US ABOUT THE FORMER DENNAWAN RESERVE?

Pastoral labour camps such as Dennawan have rarely been acknowledged or investigated as an integral part of the heritage of the pastoral industry in New South Wales, or Australia (see also Paterson 1999; 2000; 2003; Murray in press; Smith 2001). In the same way in which Aboriginal people have been largely absent from pastoral histories in south-eastern Australia, the physical heritage associated with their contribution to pastoral labour systems has also gone unrecognised. This study of the archaeology of the former Dennawan Reserve

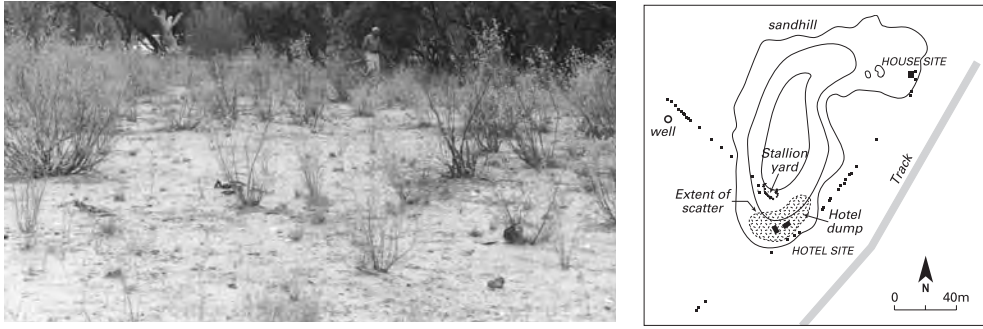




FIGURE 8.37 (left) Site plan of the stallion yards at the first Bourah Hotel.

FIGURE 8.38 (right) Detailed plan of well, first Bourah Hotel.

re-establishes the role of Aboriginal people in this system through an acknowledgment of the complex physical heritage associated with Aboriginal pastoral labour. It demonstrates that such physical heritage places can provide a great deal of information about the 'subaltern' histories (after Hall 2000) of the Aboriginal people who provided an integral economic basis for the relative success of the industry in south-eastern Australia over a period of more than two hundred years.

THE CHANGING SOCIAL LANDSCAPE OF DENNAWAN

It is possible to discern several patterns in the spatial distribution of artefacts across the site at Dennawan which give an insight into the development and history of the settlement. Stone artefacts, clay pipes and the earliest fragments of flaked bottle glass are located predominantly on the northern bank of the large lagoon. The glass in this part of the site includes glass that dates from as early as the 1870s, as well as more modern material. It is clear that some of the glass in this part of the site is earlier than that which would have been obtained from the second hotel site and the hotel dump, suggesting that this was a camp which was occupied at the same time as the first Bourah Hotel stood approximately 2 kilometres to the north. The occurrence of clay pipes in this part of the site also suggests its occupation early in Dennawan's history.

This is also the area in which most stone artefacts are located. While it is likely that Aboriginal people continued to knap stone artefacts during the early contact period, some of the stone artefacts show evidence of significant weathering, suggesting that they are likely to be hundreds, rather than tens, of years old. This suggests the use of this area for camping prior to the arrival of Europeans, and the continuing use of the site as a base camp from which to work on surrounding pastoral properties during the 1860s and later. The police station and yards associated with Tatala would have also been on the site at this time, although there are no remains that could be located associated with them today. It is possible that the cemetery thought to be the older of the two, on the southern sandhill, relates to this early period.

It is likely that during the pre-contact period, the camp at Dennawan was used on a relatively seasonal basis, and the semi-permanency of its use continued until the establishment of the hotel at the site around 1901. A plan of Dennawan as it existed in the 1890s and prior to European contact, at say about 1800, can be developed on the basis of this field survey information (Figures 8.39 and 8.40). These provide an interpretation based on field survey data which allow the development of the settlement through time to be visualised.

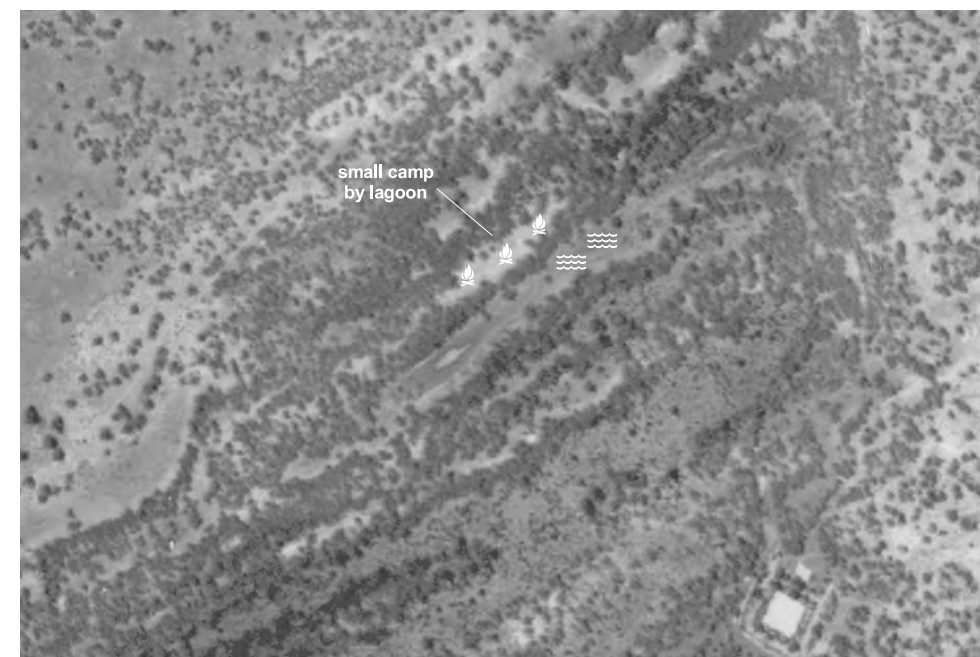


FIGURE 8.39 (above) Dennawan, c 1800.

FIGURE 8.40 (below) Dennawan, c 1890.



The social landscape of Dennawan was transformed with the relocation of the hotel to its second site in 1901, the construction of Mrs Gaffney's store and the gazettal of Dennawan Reserve in 1912. At this time, the permanent residents of Dennawan built themselves houses on the reserve area to the south of the travelling stock-route where they had previously been camping. The camping area on the stock-route continued to be used by

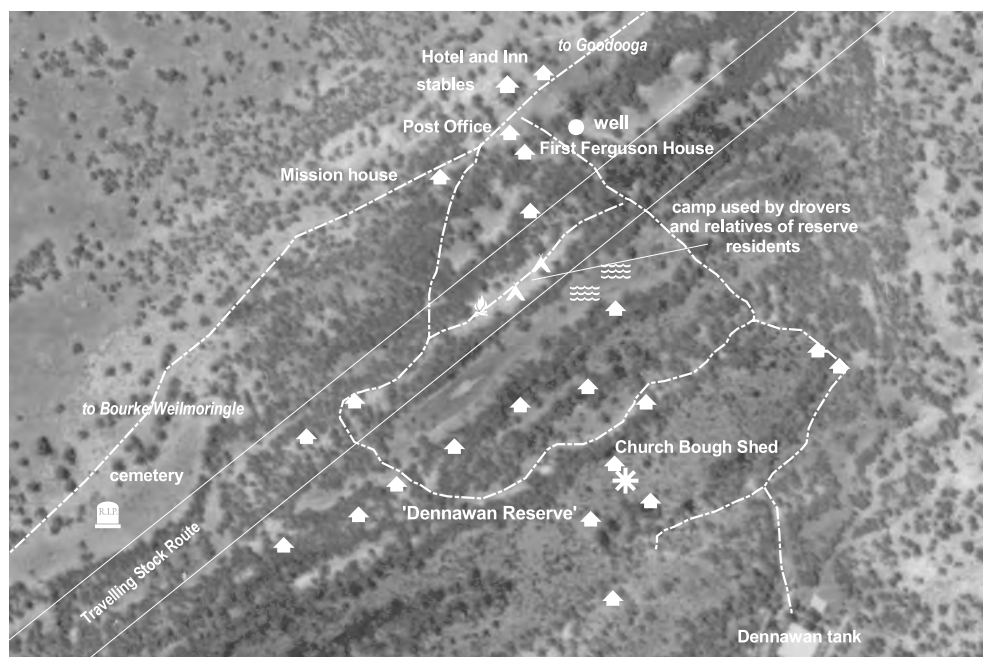


FIGURE 8.41 Dennawan, c 1930.

stockmen and itinerant travellers – black and white – while a more permanent community grew up on the reserve.

Archaeological evidence suggests there were at least 18 discrete houses with structural remains including posts that remain standing. When we consider the close association between houses and tin-can scatters, the existence of several tin-can scatters in the absence of standing posts at Dennawan would suggest that there were possibly another four or five houses which are no longer represented by standing structural features on the reserve. The construction of the mission house in the 1930s by the Aboriginal Inland Mission and the closure of the police station signalled further changes for the settlement at Dennawan (Figure 8.41).

LIFE ON THE RESERVE

The artefacts that remain on the site provide a very personal insight into life on an Aboriginal Reserve and pastoral labour camp during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some surprises come in the occurrence of decorated ceramics and other 'luxury' items such as pocket watches, harmonicas and brooches. Although Aboriginal people on reserves in New South Wales were in general at this time being represented as relatively impoverished, the archaeological evidence would suggest that this was not always the case.

Indeed, Arthur Hooper noted that for Aboriginal people who had work on pastoral stations, there was quite a lot of cash and disposable wealth at this time:

They had plenty of money. They had nowhere to spend money in those days. They used to come in to the store with their purse, and hawkers used to come all through here from Weilmoringle, and they used to buy cheap clothes you know, cheap trousers, moleskin trousers too. Cheap riding boots, a couple of pounds for boots, everlasting boots they was. They had money to spare – they had nowhere to spend it, so they used to just play cards for it. Some were very, very careful with their money too (interview, 9 April 2001).

This contrasts markedly with observations of the missionary Fred Guy, who noted in 1931:

At Dennawan there is a post office only. Our people here are very unsettled on account of having no food. The Winter is coming on and it is going to be hard for them. Some of our men have gone away, taking with them their wives and children. We were very sorry to lose their children. Two men said they were sorry to take the children from the school, but they could not leave them here to starve (Our AIM, 25 May 1931: 10).

And yet the occurrence of these items on the reserve clearly indicates that for some Aboriginal people after the turn of the century, pastoral work could be relatively lucrative and allow people to amass some personal wealth and independence from reliance on rations. Such consumer goods on the site are also testament to the widespread networks along which travelling hawkers and salespeople penetrated the pastoral frontier. The travelling hawker was a fundamental part of the infrastructure of rural Australia, which is now largely forgotten in the age of cars, trucks and shopping malls.

Similarly, the occurrence of car parts from vehicles such as the two Model T Fords suggests that there was some level of car ownership during the 1920s and 1930s amongst the Aboriginal people who lived on the reserve. While most people rode horses, apparently there were one or two cars at Dennawan at any one time. Jeremy Beckett (1988) has noted the importance of vehicular travel to the maintenance of community kinship ties in western New South Wales in the 1950s, and it appears that this system had its origins much earlier – in the 1920s or 1930s. Roy Barker speaks fondly of his first car, purchased in 1949, and the freedom that it gave him to move and work in different areas throughout Muruwari country:

As I said we were doing a lot of moving around in those days, to places like Weilmoringle, Tinnenburra, all over, but there were bodies of cars laying around in all those places, right up until recent times when some car enthusiasts got into those areas and they cleaned a lot of the cars up ... we loved driving cars in that part of the country. [I got my first car in] 1949. It was an old Chev, a Fleetmaster or a Stylemaster, I forget now, anyway I bought it in Enngonia. I think I paid £250 for it, and the next one I had was an old Chrysler utility ... this one had hydraulic brakes, and I remember one time I went over a ramp and I drove for maybe two miles more and I was going over another ramp when it stopped. I went to start it again and it didn't start and I jumped out and looked under the board, they used to have the batteries just under your feet, and the battery was gone! So I walked back, a good quarter of a mile and kept going and I walked back to the next ramp, this is a couple of miles back, and lo and behold here's the battery laying there on its side with the water all out of it and I couldn't work out how this car would go that far without a battery! (interview, 11 April 2002).



Again, the frequent finds of car parts at Dennawan speak of the relative affluence of these self-sustaining communities that lived on small unsupervised reserves during the 1920s and early 1930s. This affluence stands in stark contrast to the situation for many Aboriginal people who came under increased state control under the segregation policies of the Aborigines Protection Board during the late 1930s

FIGURE 8.42 'Aboriginal man "Rufus" with his Model T Ford on Tuncoona Station, Bourke, c 1934'. (Courtesy State Library of New South Wales: BCP 03697)

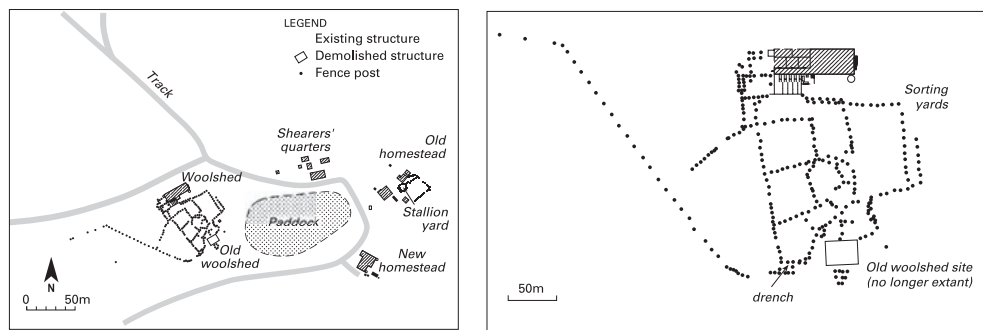


FIGURE 8.43 (left) Site plan of the Cawwell homestead complex.

FIGURE 8.44 (right) Site plan of the Cawwell woolshed and yards.

and 1940s (see Chapter 2). The history of these Aboriginal big gun shearers and their communities has been erased by more recent accounts of life on supervised Aboriginal reserves in the 1940s and 1950s. Such subaltern histories can only emerge through the detailed archaeological study of these settlements that existed outside of the mainstream, and which are rarely documented in official written records (see Buchli and Lucas 2001).

CONTINUITY OF TRADITIONAL SKILLS AND THE INVENTION OF A NEW MATERIAL CULTURE

Life on the pastoral camp at Tatala, and later on the reserve, allowed both for the continuity of traditional skills as well as the invention of a new material culture. Aboriginal people appear to have continued to make and use stone tools in addition to knapping tools made from glass bottles. These tools were used in butchering and preparation of meat, as well as in manufacturing other wooden tools. These practices have continued until recent times, and many Muruwari people still have knowledge of glass knapping practices.

Other manufactured 'Western' items of material culture were modified and transformed in distinctly 'Aboriginal' ways. Kerosene drums were recycled as housing and fire buckets over which to cook; tin cans were made into mugs and billies; while car springs were recycled for use as digging and wood-working tools. Tobacco tins were used by children to make pull-along toy cars. Such objects paint a poignant picture of the individual lives of the men, women and children of the community at Dennawan, and document the composition of the community at Dennawan as including people of all ages and both genders, from young children to old people. The composition of the community shows Dennawan to have been a large village of more than a dozen extended families.

THE ABORIGINAL PASTORAL LABOUR FORCE

Dennawan is an integral site in understanding the way in which the pastoral properties on the Culgoa were able to function, as the community effectively formed a pastoral labour camp for these surrounding properties. It is interesting to compare the structure of Dennawan as an archaeological site with Cawwell – one of the pastoral stations that it serviced.

The site at the Cawwell homestead consists of the material remains of a woolshed and associated workers' accommodation, and two former homestead sites (Figures 8.43–8.47). The first woolshed may have been constructed as early as the 1890s, although it is more likely that it was built after 1909 by the Lloyds. It was rebuilt in the 1960s. Parts of the old homestead may also date to before 1909, but again it is most likely that it was constructed progressively by the Lloyds after 1909 (although a visitor to Cawwell recalled the homestead as ramshackle in the 1930s; Veale 1997: 61). The new homestead was built in the early 1950s

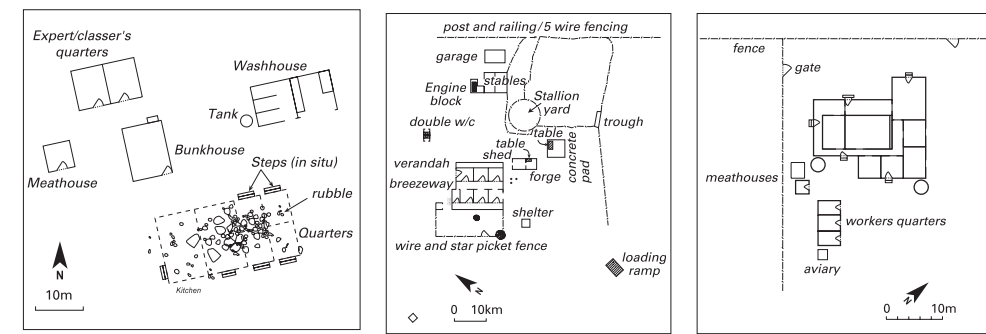


FIGURE 8.45 (left) Site plan of the Cawwell shearers' quarters.

FIGURE 8.46 (centre) Site plan of the old Cawwell homestead.

FIGURE 8.47 (right) Site plan of the new Cawwell homestead.

at around the time that Keith Lloyd was married. The workers' accommodation was probably constructed around 1930.

Roy Barker recalled shearing sheep in the Cawwell woolshed in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The original shed was located north of the current location of the yards (that is, the configuration of the yards was reversed when the new shed was built):

it was there, it was on the ground, more or less, very short blocks down some six inches I suppose from the surface of the ground. I think it was a four-stand shed, with a good wool press in it and of course the pens were there. A good board floor. The gear that was used there was the old Cooper head gear and of course the design of the shearing stands was according to the Cooper, but in later years they switched to a Sunbeam and so it was more streamlined sort of shearing gear. But in my day, as I said it, was mostly Cooper shearing stands (interview, 11 April 2002).

Although Dennawan supported a much larger permanent population than Cawwell, the latter is the kind of site that is more likely to be conserved and interpreted as 'pastoral heritage' under the woolsheds and homesteads model. In many ways sites such as Dennawan form the missing key to understanding pastoralism as a system of social and labour relations in western New South Wales, and the role of race in the mutual histories of pastoralism.

DENNAWAN AS A 'CONTACT' SITE

Dennawan was not only a community of Aboriginal pastoral workers, but also a place where Aboriginal people came under the supervision and control of the police force, and the influence of Europeans who patronised the hotel and store. The fact that Aboriginal people continued to camp on a pre-contact camping area is a testament to their resistance to resettle, as at least two attempts were made by officials to relocate Aboriginal people from Dennawan during the early twentieth century.

As was evident at Kunderang, Dennawan is not so much 'fringe' camp to the European settlement, as the European settlement has mapped on to an area which was a favoured camping place for Aboriginal people. The 'European' camping reserve on the stock-route replicates pre-contact Aboriginal land use. Despite this, the spatial segregation of the formal Aboriginal Reserve, gazetted in 1913, away from the hotel and store, provides tangible evidence of the official segregation of black and white lives that was very much a part of Australian history, even on the western New South Wales 'frontier'. Regardless of their co-

dependence, there is a clear spatial segregation of the Aboriginal Reserve and the 'white' settlement at Dennawan on the north-most sandhill.

The apparent 'respectable' distance they keep from one another is ruptured, however, when one examines the spread of archaeological remains criss-crossing the official lines on parish maps. 'Shared' places, such as the lagoon-side camp on the stock-route, were used by both black and white drovers. The spatial regime is also ruptured by accounts of AIM missionaries who camped with Aboriginal people on the reserve, and of white people 'coming in' (a term I borrow from Richard Baker [1999], which usually describes the process of Aboriginal people moving from the bush to town) to Dennawan for gambling and to take part in the spectacle of corroborees.

Lastly, the abandonment of the reserve itself is part of the 'spatial story' associated with the Aborigines Protection Board's concentration and segregation strategies of the late 1930s and 1940s (see Chapter 2; Goodall 1996; Byrne 2003a). What emerges from the archaeology and oral accounts are a set of complex mutual histories that centre on the different spaces 'on' and 'off' the former reserve site, and the mutual experience of a spatial regime that centred on race on the pastoral frontiers of New South Wales.

CONCLUSIONS

The archaeology of the former Dennawan Reserve is both complex and spatially extensive. In mapping its remains, almost 8000 discrete features were recorded. The archaeological work at Dennawan forms one of the first detailed archaeological studies of a post-contact Aboriginal settlement in New South Wales (but see Kabaila 1995–1998; Burke 1997; Brown et al 2000), and thus it demonstrates how such places might be recorded and investigated archaeologically.

Moreover, this work has demonstrated the continuous pre- and post-contact occupation of Dennawan by Aboriginal people, and revealed the chronological development of the settlement and its structure at different points in time. It remains to discuss Muruwari people's attachments to the site, and the way in which these attachments articulate with the material remains. Muruwari people relate to the former Dennawan Reserve through a complex set of beliefs about the links between relics and ancestors. Dennawan is not only an archaeological site that documents the history of their ancestors, but a site for the active creation and social memorialisation of the past.

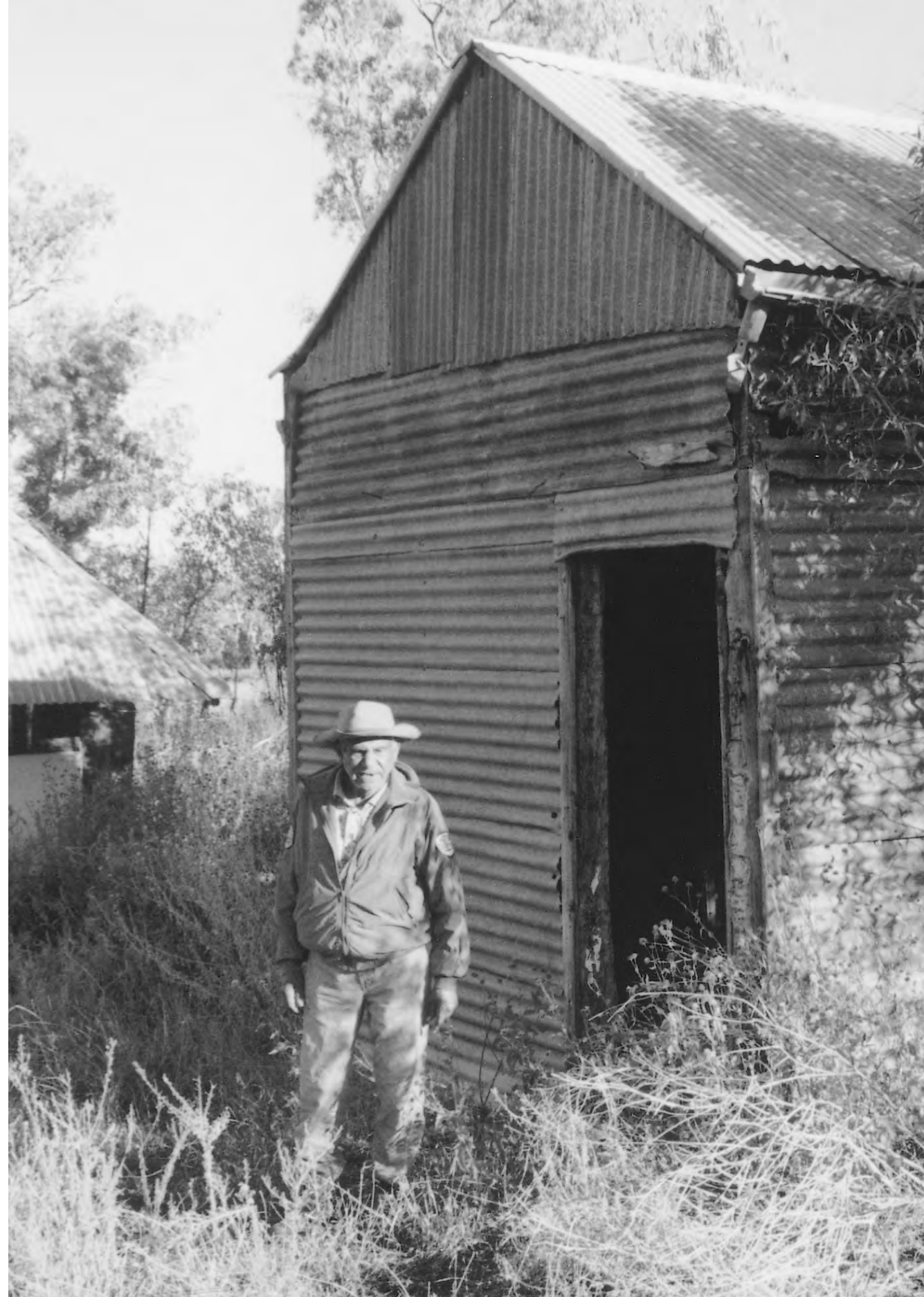


FIGURE 8.48 Arthur Hooper at the Cawwell shearers' quarters, where he shored sheep in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

CHAPTER 9

Relics, ancestors and place at the former Dennawan Reserve

This chapter develops some new approaches to understanding the contemporary social significance of Dennawan to the local Aboriginal community and its relationship with the material remains on the site. It explores the use of heritage in both locality- and identity-building by communities. This micro-topological focus on the archaeological remains at Dennawan acts as a case-study in the broader contemporary significance of the heritage of the pastoral industry to both Aboriginal and settler Australians across New South Wales and Australia.

My first experiences at Dennawan came during a visit to the site with several local Aboriginal people who had either lived or had ancestors who had lived at the site in the 1930s. The first thing that struck me was the way people interacted with and articulated their relationship with the place in an 'archaeological' manner. By this I mean that it involved interrogating, touching and talking about the material traces of the former settlement. People also interacted with the place in a formal, performative way, which suggested that the place was more than a dead memorial to the past. Instead, Dennawan emerged throughout the study as an active site for the contemporary creation of locality, community and collective identity. While I was mapping the remains of the reserve, I developed a parallel investigation into the significance of the remains to local Aboriginal people, and the way in which that significance manifests itself during visits to the site.

In this chapter I want to shift attention from the oral tradition of memory to the relationship between the artefact and 'social remembering', and the way in which objects act as memorials that shape the consumption of the past as a shared cultural memory (eg papers in Forty and Küchler 1999; papers in Bender and Winer 2001). This chapter considers the relationship between the social significance of places from which people have been forcibly removed, and the fabric that remains behind them. Particular reference is made to the development of a tradition of pilgrimage to Dennawan during which the material traces of the past are interrogated and recontextualised in the light of the present. This tradition and recollections of interactions between people and objects on the site during these pilgrimages forms a major focus for the formation of collective memories at Dennawan.

RELICS AND ANCESTORS AT DENNAWAN

Contemporary Muruwari people have a number of beliefs about relics and their relationship with ancestors that have contributed to the development of Dennawan as a place of pilgrimage. Physical contact of the body or skin with artefacts is considered to be



FIGURE 9.1 Landscapes-on-the-move: crossing the ramp that separated the former settlement from the second Bourah Hotel, Dennawan, 2001.

a way of making a 'connection' with the ancestral past. When visiting sites, particularly pre-contact archaeological sites, Muruwari people like to rub artefacts such as flaked stones against their skin. Vera Nixon explains: 'when you're rubbing the stones over your skin you can get the feeling of ... you sort of get the feeling of the spirits coming into your skin somehow or another. I dunno, it's a strange feeling, but it's a good feeling' (interview, 18 Nov 2001).

A belief that ancestors' spirits are associated with the objects that they used during their lifetimes structures people's interactions with the remains of the former settlement at Dennawan. A trip to Dennawan, then, is much more than just an opportunity to learn about the past, but to make direct and intimate contact with it. Josie Byno explains further: 'When we go and visit the place and see the artefacts that they used to use and the fire there, the oven ... we get very emotional. Not only that, there is a special feeling in the air that surrounds us. We can feel that spiritual feeling wherever we go, and we know that they are with us' (interview, 18 Nov 2001).

While it is important for people to be able to touch and interact with the artefacts on site, it is considered dangerous to take artefacts away from the former settlement. People who do this are tormented with bad dreams or sickness:

Vera Nixon: No we can't ... we're not allowed to take things away from here. Because that's too ... it's too spiritual. You know, if you take anything from here you'll get tormented by spirits, to the point where you would have to bring them back. No, you can't just take anything off here, not off Dennawan.

Josie Byno: Yes ... it's too spiritual for anyone to take things off here (interviews, 18 Nov 2001).

In contrast, just being at the site is considered to make Muruwari people feel physically healthy. Arthur Hooper, now in his 70s, noted:

ever since I've been coming out here, doing a little bit of work for people, I've been feeling really great. I'm really happy to see the old place again. And my feelings – inside me it's a very glad feeling, I have no worries about anything else. No aches and pains, I just walk around the place for hours and hours without getting tired (interview, 18 Nov 2001).

The ability of the place to affect the bodies of Muruwari people is an important facet of the spirituality and significance of the former Dennawan reserve. These corporeal influences are intimately tied to various spiritual associations with the former settlement.

MEDICINE MEN, CORROBOREES AND CHRISTIANITY

Some of the former residents of the settlement are considered to have been powerful *wiyirigan* (or *purriman*, a witchdoctor who worked magic on people while they slept; see Oates 1992: 66), *kupi* (a doctor, usually a person who performed 'good' magic; see Oates 1992: 66) or medicine men. Stories associated with their actions at the place are considered to contribute to its spiritual aura.

One such man was Tommy Tommy, who lived at Dennawan in the 1920s and 1930s. He was a powerful medicine man, who on one occasion healed a sick man at Dennawan by pulling kangaroo teeth out of his leg. Tommy Tommy was reputed to have the power to poison his enemies with the *bunda-bunda* (see also Reay 1949) – the ground up bones of long dead Aboriginal people which were put into people's tea as a fine powder. His father, Jimmy Barker, told Roy Barker a story about an incident that occurred at Dennawan while he was doing the mail run in the late 1920s:

they were camped away from the camp there, near the post office or somewhere there on the sands. They had that little spot picked out, and every time they'd come, they'd camp there and make a fire. So this particular night or early hours of the morning they heard this voice sing out and they said 'Who's that?' And the bloke said 'I'm looking for some change'. See they used to have a lot of gambling schools going, dice schools, a 'coon can' school [a card game known widely to Aboriginal people in the Bourke and Brewarrina area] ...

But getting back to this guy that came down for the change of ten shillings, I think he said, 'Who are you?' and the bloke said 'Tommy Tommy'. He was an old Aboriginal fella, I remember him from later years. Anyway, he was a renowned wiyirigan, like a doctor, a witchdoctor and ... he had the reputation of catching people and putting a curse on them, or 'put the bunda-bunda', as they would say. That was the bone.

And another curse was that if he could get close to a person and got a strand of their hair, he would put it in the fork of a tree. Sometimes you'd hear it creaking together and you would look up and see two limbs following the breeze rubbing hard on one another. I was told that if the hair was put in between the two creaking limbs that the person that he got it from would get headaches and would worry and eventually die.

Anyway, when they got up that morning a billycan was near the fire with a little drop of tea in it, and my Dad sang out to George, 'Georgey Carney,' he said, 'Now that billycan there – jump on it. Squash it up and throw it over into the sand. You never know,' he said, 'he might have dropped some bunda-bunda in it' (Roy Barker interview, 11 April 2002).

Contact with bone dust is thought to cause illness and death because it involves contact with the spirits of ancestors, which is unruly, transgressing the normal boundaries between the spirit and human worlds. By contrast, contact with artefacts on the former settlement is evocative and creative. Susan Stewart (1999) has written at length on the relationship between touch, objects and memory. The act of touching involves both action and reaction; in this way objects can be said to have agency (cf Gell 1998) and involve themselves creatively in the process of evoking 'material memories' (Kwint 1999), blurring the line

between object and subject. In this sense the authenticity of the material remains is of critical importance because of its ability, upon contact, to act on the body of a person.

Tommy Tommy was not the only healer, Joker Grimshaw was another medicine man who lived at the settlement. The association of these powerful magicians with Dennawan produces a certain 'denseness' of spiritual experience, as slippage occurs between the deep past, recent past and present.

At other times people would have visions of spirits at Dennawan. Betty Waites recounts that her uncle used to see a man wearing a grey suit who would smoke cigarettes, but would not answer or disappear if you spoke with him. He was a *miraaku*, a spirit who would appear in the evenings and hang around the shadows of the campfire light (Betty Waites interview, in Veale 1997).

The conduct of the body while at Dennawan is important. Transgressions might cause distress to the spirits who are present at the former reserve. Gloria Matthews explained to me that children were quiet at Dennawan and people are not supposed to make loud noises while they are there:

a lot of things went on there, over the years, even before we went there. Even as a kid you could feel ... the day we pulled in, and went over there, it was kind of ... the vibes, see? ... [it was] as if you were in a cathedral or something. You never spoke loudly there. And when the baby started to cry, I heard Dad say 'Sshhh!', like that, and she [her mother] went over straight away and put it to sleep. And it was always like that. They weren't loud kids, noisy kids, we played there but no-one screamed or squealed, or bellowed and yelled, you know? We just spoke naturally to each other (interview, 17 May 2002).

In addition to housing the spirits of ancestors, Dennawan is associated with a tree spirit known as the *Muraga* man:

here, somewhere along here, I can't find it, but there is what they call a Muraga tree ... I don't know where he is, somewhere over here ... there. He comes out, and he's got two big red eyes. But he won't hurt you. He'll just come out and have a look around. He's a man, in the tree. Muraga man. But he wouldn't hurt anybody. They used to say to me 'Don't go too far, the Muraga man will get you'. And I used to come back very quick smart! [laughs] (Arthur Hooper interview, 18 Nov 2001).

During field trips with DEC staff, peculiar unexplained incidents occurred, and these were considered to be consistent with the presence of spirits or ghosts at the site. One man, who accidentally knocked over one of the standing posts of a former building, feared that he would be tormented with lack of sleep.

An important facet of the spirituality of the place is its association with AIM missionaries from the early 1930s. Many of the relatives and descendants of former Dennawan residents are Christians, and the teaching of the missionaries is intimately tied to the positive spiritual qualities that are associated with the site. As in many other parts of Aboriginal Australia (McDonald 2001), Christianity co-existed comfortably with a range of other spiritual beliefs:

I had the picture in my mind just as if I saw it myself ... Miss Ginger with all the Aboriginal children singing 'There's a welcome here, there's a Christian welcome here' ... her little camp was right in the middle of all the Aboriginal camps and no harm ever came to Miss Ginger. Everyone cared for her, and shared whatever food and meat [they had], the meat being emu and kangaroo (June Barker nd).

Jim Connelly recalled that almost all of the residents of Dennawan would attend church services, held under a bough shelter in the middle of the settlement, on Sundays: 'I knew an

old chap who was out at Burban Grange mustering, they'd say 'On Sunday boss we'd like to go to church'. They'd ride in, on horses from home, ride in, and go to church and ride home again that night and start work again on Monday morning' (interview, in Veale 1997).

The fact that church services were held in a large bough shelter is considered to be symbolic of the intermingling of Christianity with traditional Aboriginal culture:

in-between Miss Ginger and the Hoopers was a big bush shed. And that was ... our church, this big bush shed. Have you seen the bush shed, out there in the west, that blackfellas have? Well that used to be a great big one. It had places for a lantern, you know, where you can hang them in the night time? ... Willi Willi, he was a real old full-blood, he didn't even have a surname see, that's why they called him Willi Willi, he'd be the last tribal person left I reckon. In 1938, he learnt to read. And he was 70, might have been 71, but Dad thought he was 70, and Dad taught him to read ... Dad was a minister, and we would go to the bush shed, and Willi would read the scriptures, you know, like they do in the church ... (Gloria Matthews interview, 17 May 2002).

Dennawan also has spiritual associations through the presence of two cemeteries near the settlement. Burial customs and practices were one of the areas in which a syncretic spirituality developed out of traditional Muruwari and Christian beliefs. June Barker's father, Duncan Ferguson, a native worker for AIM and then the Christian Brethren, was involved in burial ceremonies for two children who died on Dennawan. June Barker describes her father's involvement in burial services at Goodooga and Weilmoringle:

My father would ride the bike [from Dennawan] to take the burial service. And comfort the people because they used to mourn in the old tribal ways ... the old women crying the death wail. Then after the burial all the camps of the close relatives had to be smoked out, and the children had to be held over the smoke too (June Barker nd).

Tan (2002) notes that syncretic belief systems and the material culture associated with them should be seen as part of the process of the emergence and reproduction of local social identity. Another example of the co-existence of Christian and Aboriginal practices involved gambling; a pastime of great importance to the former residents of Dennawan. Arthur Hooper thought that the reason people settled at Dennawan was because the gambling was so good: 'this is why I think a lot of tribes came in to Dennawan. Living together, and gambling – it brought a lot of people together' (interview, 18 Nov 2001). Despite the strict prohibition on gambling evident in AIM literature, Betty Waites noted in an interview with Sharon Veale: 'All the old people used to gamble for pennies at Dennawan. It never used to worry Miss Ginger and Miss Bailey because everyone used to turn up to church. They didn't think it was a sin' (Veale 1997).

One further important aspect of Dennawan's spirituality centres around the existence of a corroboree ground on the site, where dances and ceremonies were held on the former reserve. The corroborees are one of the things that people first mention about Dennawan. The former settlement still seems to echo with the sound of these dances and songs of its former residents: 'Auntie Ruby was singing, and old Uncle Gudgibar was singing then, and old Bindie West, they were the singers. Old Gudgibar hit the boomerangs [together] and sang. And he was very good at it too. They used to do the *paliyinaa* and the *karrampara* dances' (Arthur Hooper interview, 18 Nov 2001). The *karrampara* is a dance in which bushes are tied to the ankles and the men's legs shake so that the leaves make a whooshing sound (see Oates 1992: 64).

A specific clearing was set aside for dancing and ceremony, and the location of this corroboree ground is well known to many of the Muruwari people who have visited the site. In many ways this is a fixed feature which, through emphasis by former residents to younger

relatives, has mapped itself onto the site (see further discussion below). These corroborees were often staged for the attendance of invited settlers from Dennawan itself, as well as from the surrounding pastoral properties.

Such corroborees developed during the nineteenth century throughout Australia as a form of Indigenous cultural tourism (Parsons 2002), and were an important contact zone (Pratt 1992) within which settler Australians came to experience Aboriginal culture. Equally importantly, they allowed Aboriginal people both to market the corroboree as a commodity, and to act out a form of resistance though expressing their 'otherness' in a way which was acceptable to settlers. The fact that corroborees were sung in a language which was generally not understood by the viewers, and the various levels of 'inside' and 'outside' interpretations which they were tailored to engender, meant that they could be used to encode hidden meanings (Berndt and Berndt 1988: 374; Parsons 2002: 17).

THE TRANSFORMATION OF DENNAWAN FROM SETTLEMENT TO 'HERITAGE' PLACE

The transformation of Dennawan from known place to heritage site provides insights into the relationship between memory, attachment and what remains behind at 'lost places' (Harrison 2003). This contributes to an understanding of the ways in which people reconstruct the landscapes of the past within the context of exile and diaspora, as well as the role that this 'lost' landscape plays in creating identity and a particular collective mode of remembering. The contestation between the memory landscapes of different individuals allow us to better understand the problematic relationship between the materiality of ruins and the way in which people rework the memories of a place left behind, while raising complex questions about the locale of memory and its relationship to place.

As Reigl (1982[1903]) has noted, there is a tendency with time for the memory held by a group which gave rise to the creation of a monument to become replaced by the material presence of the monument itself: 'what began as a commemorative monument turns into a historical object' (Cooper 1999: 122). In the case of the local community's engagement with Dennawan, a process has developed whereby what was 'created' as a living village has been memorialised by the process of the passage of time and the historical significance of the abandonment of the settlement to contemporary Muruwari people.

It is interesting to compare the 'lost place' of Dennawan with those lost places discussed by Peter Read in *Returning to Nothing* (1996). Most places discussed by Read were lost within the previous 45 years, well within the living memory of people who were adults at the time. However, there are now only a few elderly individuals who have primary 'lived' knowledge of Dennawan, and their experiences were as small children. Their children and grandchildren are now taking interest in and responsibility for looking after the site.

This passing of people with primary 'lived' memories of the place creates an absent space, and a desire to reconstruct memories around the ruins and decaying fabric of the settlement. Within this space, meaning and knowledge become apparent through narrated and remembered things (Stewart 1996: 205). It is not only the abandonment of the settlement and its 'age value' (Reigl 1982[1903]), but a particular engagement of Muruwari people with the aesthetic of ruins and a desire for the authentic (see further discussion below) which makes the place important. Anecdotes and bodily experiences take on new forms of significance, as each story about recent returns to nothing signifies a denser texture of knowledge and memory about the site. People become fascinated with incidents, accidents, encounters, and the significance of confrontations, discoveries and slippages.

With time, the physical traces of the site become more important as a source for the creation of collective memory, as people's 'lived' memories of the place become less clear. Access to the site and an ability to 'people' it with anecdote and incident becomes a form of 'cultural capital' (after Bourdieu), and the primary way of re-creating memory in the

abandoned space. Each new return to the site provides opportunities both for discovery, as well as to repopulate the place with newly created memories. When local Aboriginal people visited the site, frequent reference was made to events from previous visits, both in terms of the significance of individual events, as well as to map and orient themselves within the abandoned and absent spaces of the former settlement.

Particular places or objects that are memorable have become fixed points by which people orient themselves as they move across the site. Artefacts discovered during previous visits are often used as landmarks. These tend to be 'unique' or interesting objects, that people want to return to, objects that are considered to be particularly evocative of ancestors and for picturing the past of the place.

AN AESTHETIC OF RUIN AND DECAY

Objects and ruins on the site are personified. They act as focal points for creatively imagining the actions of ancestors. This observation made by Dorothy Kelly while we were at Dennawan illustrates this important part of Muruwari people's experience of this place:

Mum bought us out here to this special spot, there are a few remains still standing. Lots on the ground and lots of tins, kerosene tins that they made their houses with, and this is so special, very special. This is our Granny's house. In your mind, you can see Mumma walking around, playing around, and Grandmother here in the family. Everyone was one big family, and I think she played a lot with Musso, our cousin Arthur Hooper, and even the swing – he made her a swing over here, and it means so much ... but in our mind, you can see it all, right in front of you, everything. The house standing, Mum as she is, you can see our grandparents. Although we didn't see them, in our mind it's so clear (interview, 18 Nov 2001).

There is a focus on reconstructing the past around the ruins, accompanied by a widespread feeling of loss – often articulated by Muruwari people as a loss of culture due to a lack of language skills and loss of knowledgeable elders. The ruin of the site and the decay of the buildings is seen as a metaphor for perceived cultural decline – but investigation of what remains is considered a very important way of salvaging information and connections with the past. People often expressed the sentiment that if they could only arrest the decay of the site, they might be able to regain control of their cultural lives. Nostalgia for the way of life at Dennawan is articulated as a desire to regain control of cultural and spiritual life in the context of Muruwari people's experience of the disorienting effects of modernity.

The age and sense of history of the settlement is evoked through an aesthetic appreciation of its ruin (see Lowenthal 1985; Pearson and Shanks 2001: 91ff). The fact that its artefacts show signs of their use and age attributes to them an 'aura' (Benjamin 1970), a series of associations and evocations that 'adhere' to objects by virtue of their social lives (Kopytoff 1987; Gell 1998). Perhaps even more importantly, the interplay of object and absence creates a desire to reconstruct (Ash 1996), a creative space within which new memories can be evoked and created. For de Certeau (1984), memories created through drawing attention to absences create habitable spaces within which past and present collapse. It is both the evocation of object and absence that gives Dennawan its power as a site for collective social remembering. Ruin and decay play an integral role at Dennawan in evoking the phenomenological sense of 'being-affected-by-the-past' (Ricoeur 1988: 207; see also Boriç 2003).

On other occasions, the material remains simply evoke feelings or memories associated with particular ancestors:

Josie Byno: All my old aunties they loved brooches and beads, and they always had clothes with little beads on, and bracelets, and trinkets on. They just loved them.



FIGURE 9.2 Objects at Dennawan, such as this brooch, are considered to have a powerful spiritual aura, and act as physical extensions of the deceased.

RH: So when you see that it reminds you of your aunties?

Dorothy Kelly: Yes, really so, and Mum too ... brooches, they're really lovely, and my mum used to have a lot, and we would go through them all the time, play with them. But they would only just give you a few. Everywhere they'd go they would dress up, and they would always have a brooch, or bracelet on. Lovely, lovely clothes ... (interview, 18 Nov 2001).

The persistence of material things allows the development of links between objects and known individuals. Objects become extensions of long-dead relatives: powerful, troubling and at times problematic, they become a site for remembering the material embodiment of the deceased and the past (Hallam and Hockey 2001).

The aura of particular objects is thought to give people feelings, or a sense of intuition, about important places that have personal associations with them or their ancestors. June Barker explains:

We always liked to go out to Dennawan. We'd look around there ... its hard to describe. Even yesterday I was at Dennawan and the little bit of a [house] frame is still standing there and I got a bit emotional. I don't know whether you understand it but it's within you ... and then yesterday I was out there again with Arthur Hooper and we went over and he said 'I think this is the place here now, this is where you fellas used to live' and when I walked and stood I said 'Yes Arthur, this is the place'. You don't feel that just anywhere. You only feel that in special places and Dennawan is a special place. It will always be set in your heart (interview, 11 April 2002).

People's interactions with the traces of the past at Dennawan have been incorporated into a complex system of associations. Incidents that revolve around the material remains

of the site become paramount, as people create new memories that bind their collective identity to the site:

This part over here, where the logs are lying, is where Arthur Hooper got some sticks to make a little bridge for his sister Betty Waites and I to walk across a gully so that we didn't get wet. She was a bit nervous about going across so we held on to each other. I fell in a little bit, but Arthur, who was behind me, managed to keep me up on the little bridge. And I... that place is very special to me because it reminds me of her every time I go back to Dennawan. She was very close to us and we enjoyed being with her. She really loved Dennawan because when she was young she used to live up here [laughs] (Josie Byno interview, 18 Nov 2001).

There are important performative aspects of the interactions with the site's physical traces. Bodily experience of movement through the site and knowledge of the place formed through pilgrimages become memories. Through bodily experience the site comes to be re-experienced and re-evaluated during these 'returns to nothing' (Argenti 1999). The place is recreated as though Dennawan's occupation had never ceased, both in ways that it should have been if the occupation of the site have not ceased and in ways that re-embody the landscape with contemporary meanings (see also Tonkin 1992: 127).

The landscape's 'spirituality' also imposes itself on the body's interactions with the material remains on the site. On one occasion I was with a group of local people who were showing the place to a visitor. They went to an area where a shilling coin had been found previously and covered with a tin lid for easy relocation. On returning to the lid, the coin was gone. A later return to the site found the coin underneath the lid again. This was an event that was widely reported to family throughout the state, and to me in my office in Hurstville, as an event of significance which supported the characterisation of the place as a spiritual, abandoned-yet-sentient place. (The apparent movement of objects around the settlement also made the idea of producing a fixed map of all of its artefacts somewhat ridiculous. In this sense, the archaeological map is viewed simply as one of several interpretations of the spatial layout of the artefacts across the former settlement.)

PERSONIFICATION OF THE RUINS AND KNOWLEDGE AS CULTURAL CAPITAL

Within the context of the importance of the fabric to Aboriginal people at Dennawan, 'lived' knowledge of the site is incredibly important, and itself becomes a form of cultural capital. The ability to attribute particular ancestors and individuals to specific material remains allows a personification of the experience of the place. These personifications are important, as the dead often return to visit the living in dreams. Material remains associated with their lives become focal points for controlled interactions in the physical world between the living and the dead.

Arthur Hooper, June Barker and Gloria Matthews are amongst the few living people who have a direct, living knowledge of the place. On the basis of their memories we have continued the process – established prior to my visits to the site – of mentally mapping where different people lived on the former settlement. This information has now been built into a site plan to mirror the imagined pictures many descendants of former Dennawan residents had already built up in their own minds after consultation with their senior knowledge holders.

Gloria Matthews (née Ferguson) is one of these knowledge holders. As an eight-year-old, Gloria moved to Dennawan with her parents and lived there for several years. Gloria has produced her own map of the former settlement and the location of houses on the reserve (Figure 9.3). Sitting in her living room in Sydney, some 900 kilometres away, she recalls the structure of the settlement as a series of characters; a living village spread out across mental sandhills:

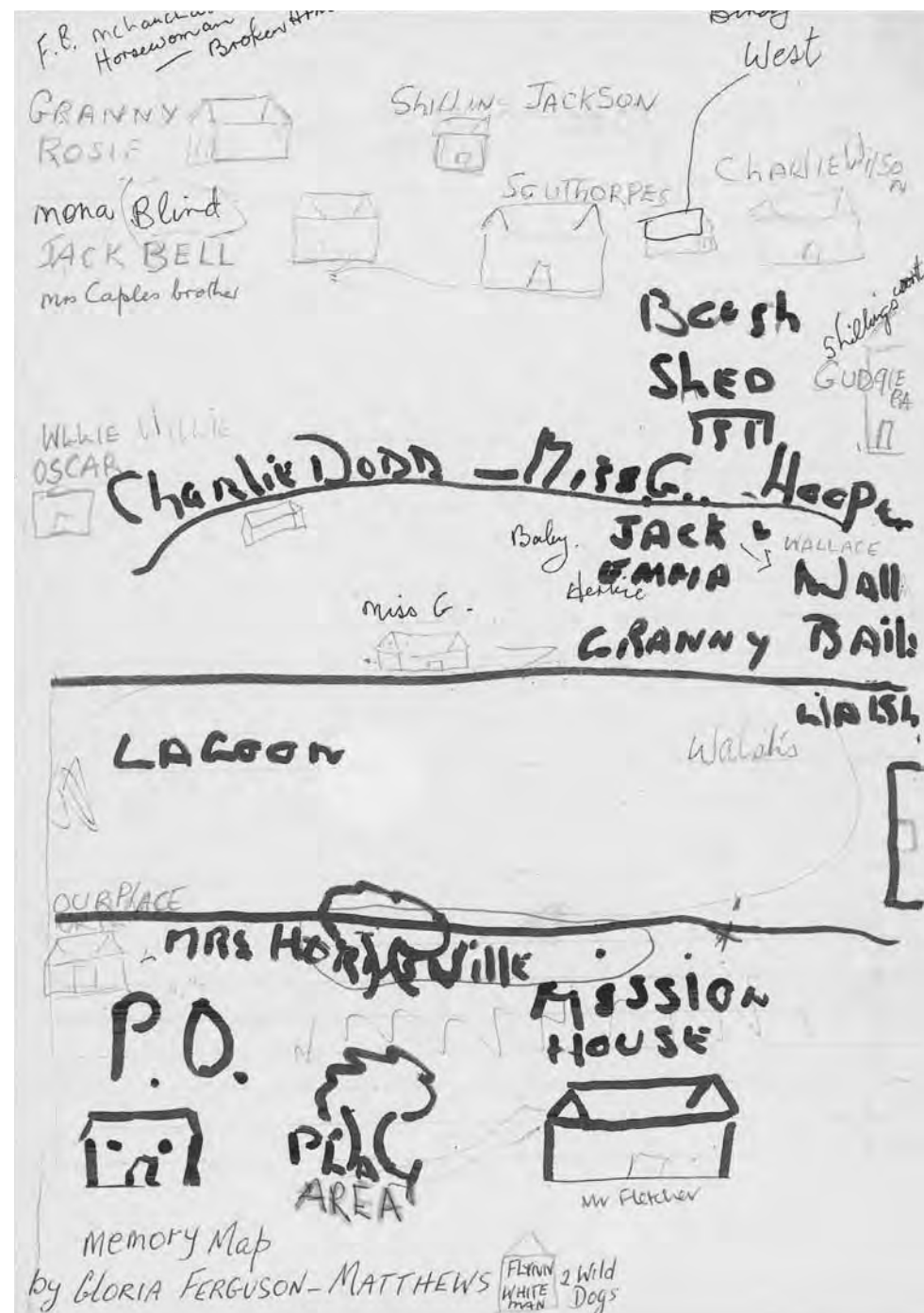


FIGURE 9.3 Gloria Mathew's 'memory map' of Dennawan.

One of these people that lived up on this top sandhill was old Granny Rosie McLachlan. She was a horsewoman when she was young. And not far away then was Jack Bell and Mona, his wife, and she was blind. And next door was the Scuthorpes, then the Jacksons. Shillin Jackson, I forget what her name was now, but she was a sister to Mrs Scuthorpe

... her name was Violet, and her father's name was Jack, Jack and Violet lived here. And they had a son named Ernie, who married one of the Sullivans, and they had the boy Tex, Tex Scuthorpe, who is famous today for his paintings. And then not far from the Scuthorpes lived Bindi West and his family. And all of this was on the sandhill! And then Charlie Wilson and Clara lived there. And then you come down, and you come across then to where another smaller sandhill, a long one, and up this end was Willi Willi and Oscar, and Charlie Dodd, they lived along here, not far from Miss Ginger (interview, 17 May 2002).

For Gloria, tracing the familiar pathways between houses on my map involved a process of remembering the settlement back into being:

And anyway, then just behind these people [Miss Ginger and the Hoopers], just on the edge of the lagoon, was Jack and Emma Wallace. And Herbie and Madeline lived with them. Then Grannie Bailey, who was mother to Emma, and up here, Rubie. His name was Donald Shillingsworth, but 'Gudgibar' was his tribal name, and he was known as 'Gudgibar'. And then old Grannie Bailey, she reared two children that belonged to her daughter, who died earlier when she was young. And then coming back this way towards the post office was this other kind of lagoon. And we were on the higher side ... this was all on the higher side of that lagoon (interview, 17 May 2002).

There is logic to this mental mapping of the site which involves making mental leaps from the material that was left behind on the site. For example, Arthur Hooper, who used to stay with his grandmother on the settlement in the late 1930s, reasoned that a particular place must have belonged to the Scuthorpes as it had the remains of a goat yards and bird cages, and the Scuthorpes were known to keep birds:

That's the yard there, see! And goats. There ... [more formally] We're here now at the place where Ernie Scuthorpe used to live, in my day, when I was a boy. And some of his mother's camp is still standing up, a few old posts are there ... and Rodney's going to take a photo of the birdcage he used to have ... old tins, laying about, old fire buckets and a whole lot of other stuff ... old goat pens ... but this is one of the ... this house was Ernie's. This is where they were, along here, and old Billy, it wasn't far from his house, see? (interview, 18 Nov 2001).

Other places are known because they were the places that descendants or friends were shown and commented on by former residents:

We were standing at our old Auntie's place, and our Mum used to bring us out here. When she used to come out here she used to get very emotional and cry ... she said they were very happy days, and they used to share everything with one another. She just loved it, coming out here to see the old place, and old relics (Josie Byno interview, 18 Nov 2001).

On the basis of all of these observations, we have as accurately as possible tried to map the names of former Dennawan residents against the locations of particular structural remains that are evident from the archaeological work (Figure 9.4).

MAPPING THE 'RETURN TO NOTHING'

Today Dennawan is an important and frequent site of pilgrimage. Since the time that the Cultural Heritage Division began working in Culgoa National Park in 1996, former NPWS visits back to Dennawan have increased dramatically. I became interested in the places and objects that former residents had noted on their visits with friends and relatives – mapping people's 'returns to nothing' (after Read 1996). This not only provides a case-study in the heritage of movement and diaspora (Harrison 2003) but also in the active local memorialisation of ancestors and place.

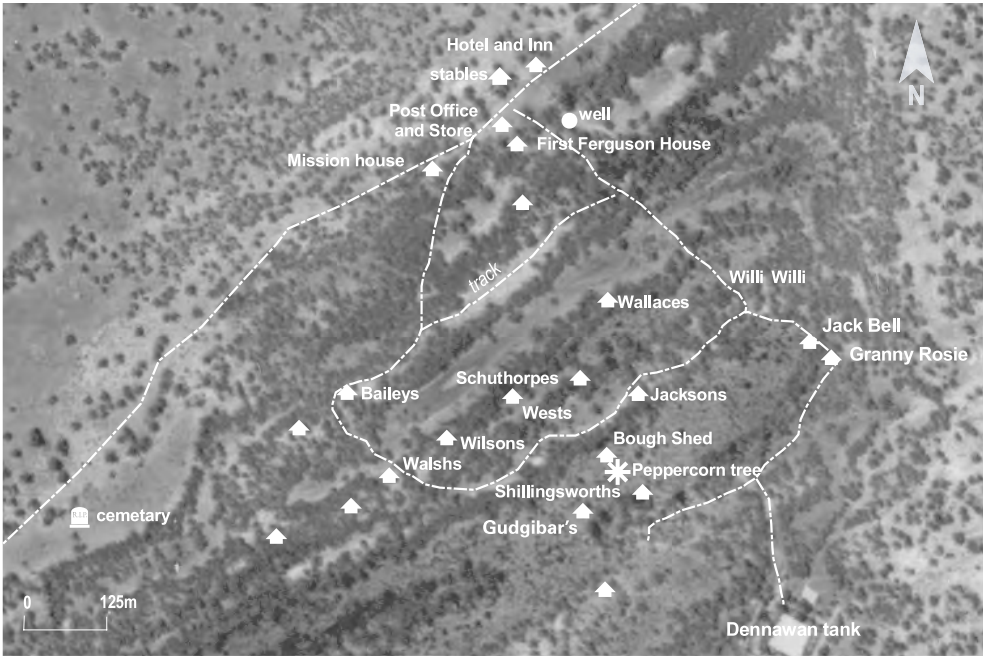


FIGURE 9.4 House sites identified on the basis of archaeological evidence annotated with occupants' names from oral accounts.

The performance of the 'return to nothing' (a chronotope of being re-united with places from which one has been removed: see Read 1996) is an integral part of the cultural and social significance of Dennawan. Indeed, almost as soon as the settlement was abandoned, people began returning to the ruins of Dennawan, taking other people with them to tell them about the history and their memories of the place. The post office was dismantled soon after its closure, and re-used as building material on a nearby pastoral station.

In 1943, AIM native worker Duncan Ferguson drove past Dennawan and noted his sadness to see all of the abandoned homes falling into decay. In 1953 the mission house was removed. In the late 1950s Duncan Ferguson and his wife Blanche had their photos taken near the remains of their first house built in 1936, its flattened kerosene tin walls and rough timber bush pole frames already fallen into ruin (Figure 9.5). Ray Gunter was a friend of both Duncan Ferguson and Robin Campbell, and was taken by both men to Dennawan on a number of separate occasions during the 1960s and 1970s.

Ray Gunter recalls these trips to Dennawan in detail:

we drove along the old Job Gate Road and came in along the fence, went in over the ramp and came into Dennawan that way. Then we parked the car and started to walk around and he pointed out different points of interest. I can remember him pointing out the stumps from the old post office. He said Miss Ginger's place was there and we walked across to a couple of broken down posts that were still in the ground. It was his old house and it was in plain view of where Miss Ginger's house was. Then we walked



FIGURE 9.5 Duncan and Blanche Ferguson at the site of their first house on Dennawan in the 1950s. (Courtesy June Barker)



FIGURE 9.6 Duncan Ferguson at the remains of his first house at Dennawan in 1968. (Courtesy Ray Gunter)

along that sand ridge and down to towards the bottom, he pointed out what they called the 'Camp Area', I think you note it there [refers to site plan]. We walked a little further down and he pointed out as we walked across the flat where water would lay, but at that particular time it was as dry as a bone. We walked across that flat and ... over a sand ridge down on to a cemetery. There was another cemetery over on the other side, which we didn't walk to.

Clearly Duncan Ferguson had impressed upon Ray Gunter the importance of the material remains of the settlement, in the same way that I had found people doing for me when I first visited the site in 2001. He continued:

Then we walked out from there to, well, a little track I suppose you'd call it, over the sand ridges, where Duncan used to ride his push bike down to Weilmoringle. And I asked him, 'How could you ever ride a push bike down that sandhill without getting it bogged?' He said he had more punctures than you could poke a stick at, even with two tyres on each wheel, but still he used to ride down to preach the gospel. We talked about the general conditions, how the water was always a problem, it was very dirty water. We looked at one of the old tanks. We walked right across two sand ridges. We were at the centre of it. We wondered whether we'd been here first or there first but from the cemetery we walked across to the Dennawan Tank and as I looked at it, well I thought to myself, 'That's pretty poor water, no wonder they finished up having to move the people from here up to Weilmoringle' (interview, 8 March 2002).

Ray had a similar experience when he went to Dennawan in 1971 with Robin Campbell (or 'Quart Pot', as Ray knew him). His memories evoke the bodily experiences of the heat of the day as he moved across the former settlement with his friend:



FIGURE 9.7 The old mail route, Dennawan, c 1971. (Courtesy Ray Gunter)

The next time we were out there was with the children, who were only young at the time, when we took old Quart Pot out. We parked out there and it was one of the hottest days you can imagine. My eldest son took the thermometer out of the car and put it outside under the shade of the tree and the reading went right to the top until it couldn't go any further, so it was very hot. We stopped the car there. We had come in the same way. As a matter of fact it was interesting because as we travelled down that track along the other side of the fence, before we got to the ramp Robin said 'This is the way that the Cobb & Co coach used to take the mail through'. We took a photo of the car and the track just down a bit from the ramp.

(Note that as we spoke Ray referred to his photographs, another of Walter Benjamin's techniques of memory-work: eg Benjamin 1970; Leslie 1999; Edwards 1999.)

We drove in and parked on the first sand ridge, just past where the old post office was. For the first time I saw over on the other side [of the sandhill] where there was a lot of bush camps and bough sheds and tents, which used to be there. It was also the first time that I saw water lying in that hollow. It was so unusual that I took a photo of it, because you don't see much ground water laying around in that area ... Then Robin said 'I'll show you the old corroboree ground'.

It was over the flat and on that sandhill. Just in front, but before you reached the next flat, it would be somewhere in that area there [refers to aerial photo]. And it was marked by two huge gum trees, I don't know if they're still standing today, but these two big gum trees stood out remarkably. There was a big flat cleared ground in the middle, with no fallen timber and no dead trees laying in it. We stood in the middle with Quart Pot, myself and two of the children, and the eldest took a photo of us in the middle of the corroboree ground. It was pretty hot but he wanted to show us more than just that so we did w



FIGURE 9.8 The corroboree ground, Dennawan, 1971. (Courtesy Ray Gunter)

around a little bit. He pointed out again where Miss Ginger's place was and things like that, which Duncan had already shown me. He pointed out where Granny Ornable had lived too. She lived down amongst a lot of other people along that second sand ridge, down in this area somewhere down in here [refers to photo] ... then we walked back to the car (interview, 8 March 2002).

Ray Gunter's reminiscences of these visits demonstrate the ways in which the occupants of Dennawan 'created' a particular way of viewing and experiencing the former settlement through the process of bringing people back. I have mapped the route of Ray Gunter's two 'returns to nothing', and there are remarkable similarities between the places he was shown, and those places that Aboriginal people show visitors today. Indeed, on my first visit I was taken along almost the exact same route that he walked with Robin Campbell in 1968. From notes on the AHIMS register, Robin Campbell appears to have shown Harry Creamer, former NPWS anthropologist, the same sites and places on his trip in 1977. This suggests that the result of all those numerous individual acts of guiding people over the site has led to the development of a formal 'route' or way of encountering and seeing the site. It is tempting to see a connection between this formal route and a funerary procession and ritual, as both produce 'embodied moments' that reproduce culturally specific systems of order (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 180).

PERFORMANCE, MEMORY AND PLACE

Judith Butler (1993; 1997) developed the theory of 'performativity' to describe the way in which representations make things happen in the world. 'Performative' is a term borrowed from Austin (1975) and Derrida (1982) to describe, in literary theory, 'speech acts' that perform particular tasks by virtue of their audible or textual presence. An example of a performative speech act is when a priest in a Christian marriage ceremony says 'I now



FIGURE 9.9 Ray Gunter and Robin Campbell at Dennawan, 1971. (Courtesy Ray Gunter)

pronounce you man and wife' (Brown 2000: 29). In the speaking of these particular words, the priest 'weds' the couple, hence the use of the term 'speech act'. Butler drew on this theory to describe the way in which representations of sex and gender realise difference. Sex and gender exist both as representations as well as through actions, which realise the difference that defines them as categories.

It is the iterativeness of performativity which re-enforces power structures such as race, gender and class, even while people are constantly resisting them.

There has recently been a great deal of interest in Butler's work by cultural geographers, who have suggested that all space should be considered 'performative'. Much of this work is summarised by Brown (2000), with reference to the ways in which the metaphor of the 'closet' is both a textual and spatial metaphor to describe the concealment of gay men's presence in the Western world. Gregson and Rose (2000, cited in Brown 2000: 35) note that 'It is not only social actors that are produced by power, but the spaces in which they perform ... These 'stages' do not pre-exist their performances, waiting in some sense to be mapped out ... rather, specific performances bring these spaces into being.'

In addition to this interest by cultural geographers, Gosden and Knowles (2001: 15) have cited Butler's work with reference to the social relations that exist in colonial societies – in their case colonial New Britain. They argue that in such colonial societies, an emphasis on the formal, performative aspects of culture exist in an attempt to make real representations that were 'too partial to encompass all social relations'. Colonial cultures are, by definition, in a state of flux (Thomas 1994), and as such the outcome of any contact experience was not set (see also Hall 2000: 39). This tenuousness of colonial relations led to the development of formalised, mimetic representations of both black and white 'culture'. These performatives, while deriving from formalised representations of cultural 'norms', are simultaneously involved in the active creation of a new 'colonial culture'.

Performativity, and the ways in which the iterative aspects of performance create space, is relevant to understanding the importance of a formal route for experiencing the former Dennawan Reserve. The routes on this journey – composed of the places and sites shown by former residents to other Muruwari people – have been invested with special significance and creative power, and are considered authentic links to a distant ancestral past. These places have the power to speak to contemporary Muruwari people in very intimate and personal ways. They are the places that document the past the way those ancestors wished to have it represented, rather than the way in which it might be represented by a third party.

In this way it forms a very genuine link to the past; an authentic memorial with which to creatively construct new collective memory. The collection of objects from the settlement is less important itself than the memories created through the process of encountering them. This desire for authenticity and its manifestation through the collection of these object-memories has links both to Muruwari people's experiences of modernity (Huysenn 1995; Naylor 1999; Hallam and Hockey 2001: 204, 211) and the performativity of colonial culture.

Cognitive memory is conscious and hence easily verbalised, while habit or performative memory (Bourdieu's (1977) *habitus*) – those memories and structures that formed out of



FIGURE 9.10 The routes travelled across the settlement during a series of visits to the site over the period 1971–2002.

routine citation or repetition – are much less likely to be recalled in the absence of that performance (eg Casey 1987). Such memories materialise only with re-enactment (Connerton 1989; Tilley 1994; Argenti 1999). These ‘landscape memories’ (eg Küchler 1993), or ‘bodily memories’, are intrinsically linked to both practice and place.

At Dennawan, the practice of walking a formal route around the settlement, experiencing the settlement from set places and pathways and interacting with the material remains in particular ways, allows what Küchler (1999) describes as an animational *erwachen* – a mnemonic recollection in which previously forgotten memories are recalled involuntarily. This involves the active moment of awakening in which the past, present and future are collapsed into the experience of a single moment, an atemporal mode of recollection that anticipates and arises out of the disappearance (or ruin) of the memorialised object. Landscape memories, produced through the interdependence of performativity and space, work on the body to create a communicative bridge between past and present, allowing people to recall and experience the past-in-the-present. The experience of this moment of awakening is something that can only be replicated through mimicking the performatives, or bodily experiences, associated with this memory.

This is evident in discussions with the Byno sisters about where their mother used to take them when she came out to the settlement. These places, in combination with the places shown to them by their cousin Arthur Hooper, are now shown to their children. This process documents the active creation of a collective memorialisation of the past at Dennawan:

- Arthur Hooper: *She used to bring you out when you were small eh?*
 Vera Nixon: *Yeah, well, she used to bring us out here when she was alive, and she used to tell us where people used to live but we can't remember much ... where they used to live now.*
 Dorothy Kelly: *A special place she used to take us was the corroboree ground, and where she used ... where her mum was living, where she used to live, you know, the main places.*

Josie Byno continues:

I think Dennawan is very special to us and it's got significant value ... a spiritual value, and we love coming back up here because our mum bought us up here when she was alive and she showed us around here. A lot of people don't do that because they don't like memories ... but my mum, she liked memories and she would get us up here as often as she could and we would spend a whole day here. And she was very emotional about the place, and now coming back it's just repeated – we get very emotional about it too. So it's really of value to us (interviews, 18 Nov 2001).

OBJECT LESSONS

The humble archaeological remains at Dennawan belie the intensity of local people's emotional attachments to the site and its relics: 'Well Rodney, sometimes it's very hard to describe the feelings within, deep within the heart, and sometimes there's no words to describe it. Even for an old tin, or any object that's just lying on Dennawan itself, it means so much, and words can't describe the feelings inside me' (Dorothy Kelly interview, 18 Nov 2001).

All of the artefacts that remain on the former reserve are invested with intense emotional and spiritual power. They form the conduit for controlled interactions both between the spirit and human worlds, and between past and present.

Instead of ceasing to exist with its abandonment, Dennawan continues to hold power and fascination for Muruwari people as a place where local traces and memories persist, challenging and actively assisting in the creation of the past and present. It does this as much through the mutual involvement of people and objects, which both evoke and create collective memories, as through their absence or decay. Place and trace provide creative opportunities for citation, quotation, bricolage and montage (Pearson and Shanks 2001) and potential forms for foundational hybridity (Boriç 2003). For Muruwari people, Dennawan is both past and future. Each trip to Dennawan represents an opportunity to excavate a 'place of buried memory' (Küchler 1999; Leslie 1999: 108).

In writing this chapter I have been reminded of Artaud's characterisation of creative inspiration as a kind of nothing, or the pressure of a feeling one has nothing to say (see Butler 2000: 36), because it calls to mind the kind of creative absent space that 'lost places' create as sites for the formation or transformation of collective memory. Memories of Dennawan are memories that arise out of the crowded and continuous reworking of fragments and ruin, the re-population of a landscape of absences with dense and meaningful incidents and stories.

The study of Dennawan covered in Part III demonstrates the complex relationship that exists between people, memory and the traces they leave behind them. Unlike the study of Kunderang, in which the spatial focus changed from a narrow to a broad one through the course of its three chapters, this examination of Dennawan saw focus shift from a wide to an increasing small spatial scale. This narrow focus on the relationship between people, objects and place on this former pastoral labour camp has raised important issues regarding people's attachment to the heritage of the pastoral industry that have not been explored or well understood by heritage management agencies in Australia. 'Heritage' and 'archaeology' form creative focuses for the active creation of community and locale. Objects and places are created as much by past activity as through people's active engagement with them in the present. This is fundamental in understanding the way in which the significance of a place to a community articulates with its material remains. It is clear that an emphasis on the material remains alone is not enough to describe the significance of the heritage of such a place, which is created in the present through visitation and use.



part 4

FROM HOMESTEADS TO HYBRIDITY

OPPOSITE PAGE Harry Earle, a cowboy on Toulby Station, with Reg Bates, the carpenter who built the shearers' quarters at Burban Grange, and Reg's daughter, c 1950. (*DEC*, courtesy Jim Connelly)

CHAPTER 10

*Shared history, shared landscapes,
shared heritage*

By examining the pastoral heritage of two national parks in New South Wales, this book considers the broader cultural values of the pastoral industry in Australia. The case-studies have been informed by a dissatisfaction with the current integration of Aboriginal heritage values into historic heritage management; a desire to discover the ‘shared’ aspects of the heritage of the pastoral industry; an emphasis on the local, community values of pastoral heritage; and a focus on the landscape heritage of the pastoral industry. In this concluding chapter, I would like to expand on some of these themes. What emerges from the case-studies is the beginnings of a new model or understanding of what constitutes pastoral heritage in New South Wales, and throughout Australia.

PASTORALISM AS SHARED HERITAGE

A major issue that has driven this study has been an exposition of the shared aspects of the heritage of the pastoral industry in New South Wales. In discussing shared heritage, I have been particularly interested in issues of the mutual experience of race in the histories of the two former pastoral properties, and the relationship between this mutual history of race and both Aboriginal and settler attachments to pastoral heritage in the present.

In undertaking this study of shared histories, I have been particularly reliant on race, or racial identification, to stress the mutuality of colonial histories. It is important at this point to identify race as a social construction (Hollinsworth 1998), and one that has been particularly contested in settler Australian history (Cowlshaw 1988).

Race has driven some of the most important historical occurrences common to both case-studies, including phases of frontier violence, and particularly the problematic dual histories of ‘assimilation’ and ‘segregation’. In using ‘race’ here I refer principally to the social constructions rather than genetic definitions of race, despite the fact that most racial policies in Australian history have masqueraded as genetic science. Segregation and assimilation have been particularly driven by theories of a ‘doomed race’ that were prevalent in Australia during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries (McGregor 1997), and emerging medical and scientific discursive tensions about what it meant to be ‘white’ in Australia (Anderson 2002).

What is needed here is a consciousness of the long historical development of discourses of race and genetics that came to Australia as part of the baggage associated with British imperialism and colonialism, which means that at no point did Aboriginal and settler Australians ever interact on equal terms. The shadow of colonialism was always looming

over these mutual histories, and is a fundamental part of understanding the way in which Aboriginal and settler Australians may experience the mutual heritage of pastoralism in both similar and different ways.

Within the oral histories of former station workers and their families we can see the very murmuring of a problematising of whiteness and blackness and the relationship between the social construction of race and genetics in Australian history. This is particularly the case in the recollections of Christine Kim, who noted that although she suffered taunts from other Aboriginal children, the fairness of her skin allowed her to subvert the segregation policies of some of the small country towns in which she lived and worked (see Chapter 5). This phenomenon of ‘passing’ has been noted as a mechanism that often develops in societies with institutionalised forms of racial discrimination (Holland 1996; Hollinsworth 1998). The severe restrictions that were often placed on Aboriginal people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Australia (Cowlshaw 1988) meant that Aboriginal people were often forced to find ways of subverting the system simply to maintain regular employment and income. This part of Kim’s oral history reminds us of both the pain and personal deprivations that were inflicted on Aboriginal people by segregation policies, as well as the existence of a counter-discourse on race in Australian history which problematises the simple divisions of ‘black’ and ‘white’.

Acknowledging shared histories is not about censoring the experience of race in Australian history. As Cowlshaw (2000) notes, there has been a tendency to reject race as an analytical category in favour of hybrid social forms. ‘Hansonism’, a set of ideas popularised by One Nation leader Pauline Hanson, can be characterised as the delegitimisation of the lived experience of racial difference in Australia (see Cowlshaw 2000: 102; Lattas 2001). While this book has been concerned with hybridity and shared social relations in Australian history, it has also sought to invoke the very real lived experience of race and the racialised body in Australian history. This history is shared not in the sense in which it was homogenous, but through the mutual self-definitions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who lived and worked together (and were sometimes segregated from one another) in the study areas. There can be little doubt that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people were changed by their cross-cultural encounters. Both difference and hybridity are fundamental to understanding the histories and heritage of black and white Australians in rural Australia.

Another theme of the case-studies has been the way that Aboriginal people have been able to maintain cultural identity and cultural traditions alongside their pastoral work, often in the face of explicit government policies to assimilate Aboriginal people and remove their distinct identity (Goodall 1996). This has been a particular theme of work in the history of the pastoral industry in northern Australia (eg McGrath 1987; Rowse 1987; 1999; Cowlshaw 1999). Cultural traditions and group identity form a major focus of Aboriginal people’s attachments to the heritage of the pastoral industry in New South Wales, as a symbol around which to articulate both issues of historical transformation and continuity in post-invasion Australia. At both Kunderang and Dennawan, the regularity of pastoral labour allowed Aboriginal families to continue to work and live on their ‘country’, maintaining traditional connections with land and kin. The pastoral industry also allowed Aboriginal people to learn and exercise new skills, and established traditions of parents passing down pastoral labour skills to their children. This helped to solidify the ongoing connection between people and places in the face of widespread removals and dislocations of Aboriginal people throughout New South Wales.

In addition to the things that Aboriginal people learnt from settlers about pastoral labour, there were a set of skills, knowledge and deeper understandings of landscape that Aboriginal people passed on to settler pastoralists by working together. From the use of bark shelters and dishes at Kunderang, to the tracks and pathways which they used to travel

through the country, non-Aboriginal people learnt many things from Aboriginal pastoral workers and their families.

More subtle influences on the way settler pastoralists came to relate to landscapes were also passed on. This now forms a fundamental part of settler pastoral culture. Jeremy Beckett (1978) has already noted the similarities between the way that settler pastoralists and Aboriginal people ‘sing the country’, and at Kunderang too we see both Aboriginal and settler pastoralists using similar linear narrative structures to describe their relationship with landscapes-on-the-move (after Bender 2001).

Although it has not been a specific focus of the case-studies in this book, it is also important to remember the mutual histories of other distinct ethnic groups in relation to the heritage of the pastoral industry. Chinese migrants found work in the 1880s in western New South Wales in wool-scouring, while ‘Afghan’ Australians also have had a long association with the pastoral industry in Australia. Often people from these ethnic groups filled similar roles to Aboriginal people in the pastoral labour force, and organised their work camps in similar ways to Aboriginal people (see Cowlishaw 1988). For this reason it might be expected that they would have formed similar attachments to the heritage of the pastoral industry to Aboriginal people. There is obviously a requirement for more work on multicultural heritage in Australia (eg Martin Thomas 2001; Mandy Thomas 2002), and particularly on the importance of pastoral heritage to other (non-Anglo) settler Australians.

Seeing pastoral heritage as shared or mutual heritage has important implications for the way in which we assess and manage the heritage of the pastoral industry. It is no longer possible to interpret pastoral heritage (or historic heritage in general) simply as settler heritage, but as a form of heritage that intimately involves both black and white Australians. Pastoral history and heritage forms an arena within which the post-colonial histories and heritage of Aboriginal people can be written large across the Australian landscape, exposing the problems inherent in the neglect of the post-contact period in Aboriginal heritage assessment and management in Australia. Perhaps more importantly, the pastoral industry clearly formed an important shared contact zone for both black and white Australians. It is only through the integrated research and management of Aboriginal and settler heritage in Australia that we will be able to understand the ways in which these experiences of contact have shaped our shared, collective understandings of history and landscape. This suggests the need for a reworking of the current structure for cultural heritage management in Australia to be more inclusive of the shared aspects of post-contact history and heritage.

PASTORALISM’S LANDSCAPE HERITAGE

A shift away from a focus on the ‘homesteads and woolsheds’ to the way in which pastoral heritage is distributed across the wider landscape has had major implications for the new pastoral heritage model. At East Kunderang, we see a hierarchy of work-sites that are distributed throughout the landscape. Outstation huts and mustering camps associated with yards, paddocks and clearings write large a system of mustering across the falls country. Mapping the oral histories of former pastoral station workers not only provided information about the mustering routes that people travelled through the country and the association between these diverse sites in the landscape, but also insights into the phenomenological landscape (Feld and Basso 1996; Ingold 1997; 2000) of pastoral workers. By riding and walking along familiar pathways and mustering routes, pastoral workers and their kin created a familiar sense of being-in-the-landscape (after Bender 2001), while simultaneously creating that landscape. As Redmond so elegantly explains:

Space and place have meaning and existence only in relation to the positioned, mobile, and intentional human body ... Far from being ‘frozen over’ or ‘outside time’, human experience continues to draw lifeblood from, add clarifying detail to, and animate the

mythic structures of country. Human emotional investment makes the country ... grow (2001: 136–37).

In many ways, the work on East Kunderang can be understood as a response to Gaston Bachelard’s call for ‘each one of us ... [to] speak of his roads, his crossroads, his roadside benches; each one of us should make a surveyor’s map of his lost field and meadows’ (1969: 11). In this same work, he speaks of habits as the ‘passionate liaison of our bodies’ with a space or landscape (in Wise 2000). At both East Kunderang and Dennawan, space and place are created through people’s active engagement with landscape, memory and history.

Archaeological sites and heritage places are the sites of local memorialisation, and both evoke and reproduce the memory of the ancestral past. The archaeology of the former Dennawan Reserve has much information to contribute regarding the relatively ‘hidden histories’ of Aboriginal pastoral labour camps in the nineteenth and twentieth century. However, the ruins of the former reserve are much more than a source of information to local Muruwari people, but represent instead the site for a program of shared, collective memorialisation of the past. To local Muruwari people, their history is enmeshed in social trails created by the movement of people and symbolised by objects which remain embedded in a landscape from which people have been made absent. Paradoxically, these objects are the things that were left behind, not the transitional objects that their ancestors themselves might have chosen to take with them in an attempt to rebuild personal and collective origins in the wake of their displacement (Parkin 1999). These objects are more than just symbols, but constitute a medium for interacting with the spirit world, a way of bridging past and present that might partially compensate for the rupture and loss associated with the forced removal from the reserve.

Managing the physical and mental landscapes associated with the heritage of the pastoral industry challenges heritage managers in Australia, where a strong distinction has traditionally been drawn between natural and cultural heritage (Worboys et al 2001; Aplin 2002). The integrated management of natural and cultural heritage is now an explicitly stated aim of many state and federal land managers in Australia, and an openness to integrated management is an essential pre-requisite to managing the landscape heritage of pastoralism in New South Wales. Further work is needed to see how far models from the US National Parks Service in the management of biodiversity associated with formerly grazed landscapes, for example, might be used in Australia (eg Harrison 2002c).

THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PASTORAL HERITAGE

My interest in the contemporary social values of heritage is tied intimately to the idea of heritage as a form of local action, rather than the use of heritage that emphasises the ‘big’ themes of European settlement and expansion in Australia. For the former pastoral workers and their families who have associations with East Kunderang, the station is a symbol in their past, even though they may never have visited the place. The heritage of the property is a symbol around which they can memorialise and represent their past. The work of the pastoral station and its expressions in and through the landscape is an important part of the way former workers understand themselves and their relationships with the world.

This heritage and landscape are at once familiar and unknown. People’s sense of place is contingent both on those things that are familiar, as well as those things that are unseen in a larger mental, temporal and spatial field of relationships. The present is made up of a sum of moments that are drawn from an entanglement of genealogies that draw on the recontextualisation of the past-in-the-present. East Kunderang is simultaneously a physical place, and the *effect* that it has on the memories of the people who have attachments to it.

In the Introduction, I drew on Appadurai's (1996; 2001) exposition of the tensions between the way in which heritage is used by local people, and its role in justifying and perpetuating the 'great' themes of settler colonialism by the nation-state. Throughout the book, heritage has been seen as both physical things, as well as a discourse that is mobilised for different political and social reasons. The maintenance of heritage – either through physical 'maintenance' work, pilgrimage, or through reproducing the memories of places and things – is one of the ways in which local communities keep in touch with place, and each other. The oral histories and landscape biographies reproduced in the book represent different ways in which communities maintain effective links with place through the selective commodification and emphasis on particular traces or aspects of the past. They are therefore both historical documents and 'maps of attachment' (after Byrne and Nugent in prep).

I also introduced Habermas's concept of *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld) and its relationship with communicative action and human agency. Through daily experience, practices of the lifeworld become normalised. Individuals interpret any situation through an analysis of the social actions of others. Individual agents are able to draw on their personal experiences to determine how they will negotiate any given situation, but are limited in their choice through the requirement to communicate with others. Thus culture is produced and reproduced by a desire to communicate with others. Shared, collective memorialisations of the past form one sort of communicative action through which meanings can be conveyed and new meanings can be developed, through the simultaneous appeal of heritage to the past and present *Lebenswelt*. In the two case-studies we see evidence for pastoral heritage forming a 'communicative bridge' (after Wilkie 2001) between past and present, between different members of the community, and between both Aboriginal and settler Australians. Such uses of heritage tend to decentre the authority of heritage experts, drawing instead on local memorialisations of the past to meet present local challenges and needs. This aspect of the significance of heritage at the local level is dynamic and shifting, and represents the social life of pastoral heritage. It is this social life that makes the protection and recording of pastoral heritage in New South Wales an important pursuit.

'ARCHAEOLOGIES OF ATTACHMENT'

In Chapter 3, I characterised the diverse set of project methodologies as 'relatively' rapid ethnographic procedures; a combination of traditional participant and rapid ethnographies with oral history, structured and unstructured interviews, archaeology, behavioural mapping, and archival history. The aims, focus and method employed throughout the project were developed as part of an ongoing dialogue with members of the community as the project progressed. The differences between the scale and nature of data collected in each case-study derives to a large extent from this interactive approach to project design. The spatially extensive range of the project methods, in particular the oral history mapping and field archaeology, have strongly flavoured the outcome of this volume. The 'archaeological' approach was intended to emphasise not only the more ephemeral material remains associated with the heritage of the pastoral industry, but also the contemporary relationships that communities and individuals form with material heritage.

There is the possibility that a move away from the homestead has the potential to create gender imbalances in the interpretation of pastoral heritage. My critique of the stress on homesteads as pastoral heritage certainly should not be seen to extend to a gendered analysis of pastoral homesteads and the household (eg Allison 1997; 1998; 1999). Such analyses certainly would be encouraged under the social history-oriented pastoral heritage model



FIGURE 10.1 Kerry and Co, 'A Pioneer Settler', Sydney, c 1905–1917. Gender and the household remain important aspects of the new pastoral heritage model, despite calls for a shift in focus away from the homestead and woolshed. (Glass negative, full plate; courtesy Powerhouse Museum: no 85/1284–777)

proposed in this book. Likewise, the examination of mustering tracks and routes which was prominent in Chapter 6 should not be seen as an opportunity to move away from the information which the household can provide, particularly about women and children, who increasingly found the homestead to be a locus for their activity throughout the twentieth century.

Rather, the model should be seen as critical of a preoccupation with managerial and technological history, at the expense of a more holistic and inclusive interpretation of the experiences of men, women and children in the landscape. While gender has not been a specific theme, women have appeared in a number of guises in this book – in both traditional roles as wives and domestic helpers, as well as less traditional roles such as mustering cattle and building fences. 'En-gendering' history is an important outcome of undertaking more subtle and nuanced analyses of historic heritage in Australia. The intersection of gender issues and rural, landscape-based heritage are currently being addressed within the context of another DEC research project, on women and National Parks in New South Wales.

Part of the strength of the approach documented in this book lies in the multiple lines of evidence that have been examined, although I am conscience that 'deeper' analyses utilising any one of the different methods described above may have produced different insights. Having said this, I feel the case-studies call for a more embodied approach to heritage assessment in Australia, and a greater emphasis on the social uses of heritage. Similarly, the phenomenological approaches to mustering landscapes tell us both something about the landscape itself, as well as about the way in which pastoral workers understood and moved through it. Such approaches warrant a greater involvement in heritage management and assessment.

FROM HOMESTEADS TO HYBRIDITY

Pastoral heritage in New South Wales is more than the somewhat ubiquitous ‘woolsheds and homesteads’, the showpieces of white, male settler colonial economies. Pastoral heritage is the product of the mutual histories of Aboriginal and settler Australians. It is a form of heritage that is both in and a part of the landscape; pastoral landscapes are simultaneously natural and cultural. Perhaps more importantly, pastoral heritage is more than just the tangible, physical remains of stock camps and outstation huts, but resides in the memory and the social communicative actions of the local individuals and communities which use it. An ‘archaeological’ approach to the heritage of the pastoral industry has involved both recording sites and excavating attachments to community heritage.

Throughout the book, there have been many examples of montage and collage; the use of traditional Aboriginal skills and technologies as part of a foundational hybridity which has given rise to contemporary Aboriginal and settler culture in each study area. The idea of ‘trace’, or foundational ‘things’, is integral to writing such histories. Imperial histories seek to erase the trace, and such erasure is a fundamental tool of concepts such as *terra nullius* which seek to overwrite Aboriginal people’s foundational influence on Australian society (see also Harrison 2002d). Shared histories work directly against such a stance, through celebrating the way in which Aboriginal and settler lifeways and cultures have been fundamentally entangled for the past 220 years.

Cowlishaw’s (1999) metaphor of the landscape as palimpsest (see Chapter 2) serves as the best description of a particular way of thinking about the past that is critical to writing shared histories. Although imperialist histories have explicitly sought to erase Aboriginal people from Australian foundational history, the denseness of Aboriginal cultural experience and knowledge has a tendency to break through the thin veneer of imperial history which has overwritten it. At East Kunderang, Aboriginal people were at first quite difficult to find, but scratch just beneath the surface and there is another world which emerges. The ultimate conclusion of this project is that we need to celebrate, through the acknowledgment of the shared heritage of historic places, the creative opportunity provided by this foundational hybridity in Australian history. Writing shared histories and celebrating shared heritage has the creative power to reconcile Aboriginal and settler Australians in powerful and positive ways.

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Further interviews were recorded on video tape at Dennawan on 10 April 2002 in conjunction with the Dharriwaa project with Roy Barker, June Barker, Ted Fields, Vera Nixon, Josie Byno, John Kelly and Dorothy Kelly. This video material is held by the Dharriwaa project, Walgett Medical Service, Walgett.

Other informal interviews were held during the Kunderang Stakeholder’s workshop on 22 March 2001, field trips to Rusden’s Creek, Riverside and Rowley’s Creek during November 2001, and trips to Dennawan, Cawell, Lightning Ridge and Weilmoringle over 2001 and 2002.

Other interviews cited from published works were:

Coffie, Essie	interviewed by Sharon Veale, Goodooga, 1996 (edited transcript in Veale 1997, appendix 3)
Connolly, Jim	interviewed by Sharon Veale, Dubbo, 1996 (edited transcript in Veale 1997, appendix 1)
Waites, Betty	interviewed by Sharon Veale, 1996 (in Veale 1997: 106)

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COMMISSIONERS FOR CROWN LANDS REPORTS

Commissioners for Crown Lands Reports are held in despatches to and from the Governor of NSW, 1838–1846 and enclosures to Despatches, vols 70–75: Mitchell Library, CY1949 and CY1950. These are continued in Chief/Colonial Secretary’s Correspondence, In Letters (CSIL), and Commissioners of Crown Lands (CCL) itineraries (State Records NSW).

AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES (FORMERLY ABORIGINES INLAND MISSION) RECORDS AND MANUSCRIPTS, 1903–1998

This manuscript series, held by the Mitchell Library (MLMSS 7167, boxes 1–40; and PXA 773, boxes 1–8) contains material relating to the Aborigines Inland Mission, and was surveyed with particular reference to the AIM post at Dennawan in the 1930s and early 1940s.

ABORIGINES PROTECTION BOARD AND ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD RECORDS

Register of Aboriginal Reserves: Bellbrook Mission (SRNSW, reel 2847).
Bellbrook Station Reports and Returns 1946, 1947 and 1948.

PASTORAL STATION RECORDS

Moona Plains: Material held by the UNE Heritage Centre in Armidale, including letters, wages books, ration books and stores books. In particular, reference was made to Day book for Moona Plains and Cunderang [1855–1862] and Ration book [1892–1922, incomplete].

Kunderang: Material held by the UNE Heritage Centre in Armidale, in particular, reference was made to Stores issue book [1865–1870], Wages and account book [1894], Wages book [1919–1931], Wages and stores book [1931–1947].

Australian Agricultural Company: Extract from Annual Report, 1825, AAC, London.

Gnomery: N8/108 Station Reports – Gnomery [1901–1907] held in the Noel Butlin Archives of Business and Labour, Canberra. Material on Gnomery and the pastoral properties which now form Culgoa National Park were read with reference to the *Australian Pastoral Directory* which shows each station/run in a particular pastoral district and the name of who owned it. The first Pastoral Directory was published in 1891.

Toulby, Talawanta, Byerawering, Burban Grange and Cawell: Records for these properties are held in Western Lands Lease files, Department of Conservation and Land Management (Dubbo office), and SRNSW. Material includes Lands Department and Western Lands Department records. Some relevant material including records of sale of land and stock on these and associated properties was consulted from the Noel Butlin Archives, Canberra.

DEC REGISTERS AND ADMINISTRATIVE FILES

The DEC maintains a register of Aboriginal sites for NSW (AHIMS) and historic heritage on park (HHIMS).

Particular reference has been made to HHIMS site cards and associated reports for East Kunderang, Oxley Wild Rivers, Culgoa and Werrikembe National Parks, and to Aboriginal site cards and associated reports for sites within a 15 km radius of each park. This book extensively cites information from site card 9-1-6 'Dennawan', and associated reports.

Administrative files associated with the management of Oxley Wild Rivers National Park and Culgoa National Park were referred to, along with collections of historic photographs and other donated documents held by regional and area offices.

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NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

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